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\$500 REWARD! Lost! DECEMBER 25TH!

By OCTAVE THANET.
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because, but for this window a little girl of three, in the daintiest furred long coat, with a mop of spun gold rings tumbled over the gray fur and blue cloth, would not have stopped to admire its splendors and the patient Swede girl with her, would not have coaxed her in vain.

Miss Celia looked at the child with a friendly smile. Spinster as she is who has passed more than one birthday in the forties, there is no living woman with a warmer heart for children. Besides, had she not her own little boy waiting for her at home? poor Eliza's child left to her with Eliza's diamonds and a pretty legacy, five years ago.

Eliza was the beauty of the Wilder family, Celia's own sister; she had been married in Washington; (when Gen. Wilder was in Congress) to a rich New Yorker with weak lungs, who could not live at home. There, Eliza held court for ten years; not forgetful of her sister who visited her regularly every winter. Then came a last sad winter; Eliza and her husband died within four months of each other, and the poor little rich boy was left to his aunt. It was six years ago. Rex was only a baby; and the wrench and shock had somehow been outlived, for "the strong years conquer us"; but Celia's faithful heart often ached yet. She had taken the pretty, delicate, little creature and reared him with much love and some tears lest she should miss the best course for a boy. If only her father had lived! Celia believed her father the noblest of men and a great statesman. She had been his friend, his confidant, his private secretary, and his never faltering worshipper. For his sake, she who had been a handsome girl and was a distinguished looking woman, had never married, in spite of many lovers.

After his death, she lived alone in the old house that her father had left her, and dined with the family portraits, until Rex came.

Remembering Rex now, she smiled again on the little girl, saying, in her gentle, high bred voice: "Do you want something in here, dearie?"

"I want to do in and talk to Santa Claus," said the little lady very composedly. "My mamma did talk to Santa Claus—one day in a store."

"Sie must go home," the maid interposed, "we must take care; Mrs. Brace, sie not like it."

Miss Wilder's face changed at the name; and her hand dropped off the little shoulder. She said coldly that a car was coming and without making any further remark, turned and went up the hill; too absorbed in some sudden thought to remember her

book, or even to notice Mrs. Rollins who had come up puffing a little with "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonard."

Mrs. Rollins was a little, plump, white woman, with pretty toilets and a lisp. She appeared soft, timid, and possibly a silly; but she was sufficiently acute. The Reverend Thaddeus Graves Rollins, her husband, was rector of the parish to which Miss Wilder liberally subscribed. She went every Sunday, twice a day to church, she attended the week day services in Lent; but she did not belong to the church. Why? That is what Mrs. Rollins was telling Mrs. Dubarry, the librarian, while Miss Celia tramped more and more swiftly up the hill.

"She hurried off so quick that I couldn't make her hear," said Mrs. Rollins between pants, unloosening her sealskin.

"Why, I saw her talking to Mrs. Brace's little girl only a minute ago," said Mrs. Dubarry, a stranger in the place; a reserved, dark woman who had known enough hardship and turmoil to be thankful for this quiet harbor.

"Ah, that was it, Betty," (Mrs. Dubarry was an old friend of the rector's wife.) "I do believe she didn't know and then somebody told her."

"Know what, Janet?"

"Know her own niece. That child is Miss Wilder's niece."

"Why shouldn't she know her?"

"Well, it is a longish story, and the placard says 'Do not talk!' you know."

"Oh, certainly, perhaps we would better not," said Mrs. Dubarry timidly with a thought for the Board of Trustees and the mites at home, and how much the salary meant to her.

"There's nobody here," said Mrs. Rollins who stood in less awe of the Trustees, knowing them better, "I think here is about the only place that isn't crowded. Well, you might as well know, Betty, because otherwise, Miss Celia being here so much and all, you might put your foot in it with a stray question. It is this way. You know Miss Celia's father was General Wilder. He had a regiment in the war and was breveted General and was our member of Congress until he died; would have been our senator if he had lived. Miss Celia thought him the greatest man on earth. Well, General Wilder had two wives; it is to be supposed he got along comfortably with the first one, (Celia's mother) she died when Celia was fifteen, and he married again, which I have been told, Celia took very hard. Whether it was her step-mother's fault or hers they were not happy. The step-mother was a handsome creature, very gay and fond of admiration; the husband was absorbed in politics, he was used to his

daughter's sympathy and to being considered a demi-god; his wife didn't bow down and worship him as he was accustomed to be treated; she was waiting to be worshipped herself. The result was, they quarrelled. There was one child, a girl, she was ten years old and Celia about twenty-eight when the crash came and the pair separated; exactly why, nobody knows, but there was plenty of gossip. The little girl went with her mother and from that day to this Celia has never had a word to say to her sister."

"But don't you think that hard?" said Mrs. Dubarry, "you know the child naturally would cling to its mother."

"Oh, that wasn't the whole story. As the girl grew up, her father wanted to see her and she sided with her mother and wouldn't see him, and it was very horrid indeed! They do say that he sent for her when he was dying and she wouldn't come. I don't know."

"Did he leave her any property?" said Mrs. Dubarry, who poor soul was so poor, that she could not help considering money any more than she could help breathing.

"Yes, that was the odd part of it. He left her almost as much as he left Celia."

"And she is rich!"

"Why, I suppose Celia must have two hundred thousand."

"What became of the mother?"

"She went to Europe."

"And the daughter?"

"She married too, and has come here to live, you know her, it is Mrs. Brace."

"And that was her daughter?"

"Yes, her only child. It does seem a wicked thing for two sisters to be living within a stone's throw of each other and never speaking."

"And if they meet, what do they do?"

"Nothing, pass each other like strangers. Once they were together at a church soeable and someone tried to introduce them."

"Mercy! What did they do?"

"Miss Celia drew herself up and said: 'I must decline to know Mrs. Brace'—like that, and turned on her heel; while Mrs. Brace went all sorts of colors. I was told that she was willing to be introduced but



Chapter I.

MISS CELIA WILDER did not stop at the public library, as her custom was, on her way up the hill. Yet she had intended to stop. Though it was the day before Christmas, and Miss Celia was loaded with bundles she still had enough loose silver in her pocket to pay her passage in the electric car that creaked and whirled up the hill past her, a red blur in the winter dusk; crammed like a beehive; however, she would not ride, she would walk and go into the library for the "Crime of Sylvestre Bonard," to be finished and left there for her to-day, by Mrs. Rollins. Indeed, she did walk as far as the library, and paused outside the door. The library is a thin, high brick building, with an unhappy accident of a tower on one side; but Miss Celia admired it, because her father had given it to the town. She looked, now, with a sentiment approaching to fondness on the great oaken doors and the little shops which flared in front. One shop was a milliner's and the other a confectioner's; and in the latter window was a glitter of iced cakes and sugar forms, all under the eye of a Santa Claus uprearing a Christmas tree.

Had there not been this window Miss Celia would have gone in for her book;

H.C. Brown, N.Y.



MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS:

Let me tell you how to have some good times with your presents this Christmas. We all enjoy the day, and the giving and receiving of gifts; and as it "comes but once a year," we might as well have just as jolly a time as we can.

One way of distributing the presents, is to have them all snugly wrapped in paper (and the more layers the better) and placed in a big basket the day before. Cover the basket with a shawl or blanket hung over two chairs. On Christmas morning, all gather around the basket, while one draws forth and distributes the parcels, which should of course be plainly marked with the name of the intended recipient. Scissors will be in loud demand for a while, and the floor will be apt to present a chaos of paper and twine; but that only makes more fun, you know.

A variation on this is to wrap all the small parcels in several papers, each wrapper bearing the name of some one of the family, while the inner layer has the name of the one for whom the gift is really intended. As these are opened and passed around from one to another according to directions, the faces of the unlucky ones who find that a specially desirable parcel is not theirs after all, and the delight of others in an unexpected "run of luck," is very amusing.

Another very exciting plan is to hide the gifts, properly wrapped and labelled, in all parts of the house, from garret to cellar, and set the family to hunting. When one finds a parcel not intended for himself, he lets it alone and says nothing; this prolongs the hunt, and gives a chance for kindly hints. Sometimes strings are fastened to certain parcels, and then woven all over the house, into trunks and boxes, up and down stairs, etc. The end of this



THE START.

string is given to the destined owner of the gift, and he is told to wind it up until he finds the end. This makes fun if it is tried in the evening, when the house is only partially lighted.

Still another way is to arrange the parcels after the fashion of the "fish pond" at a fair, and let the family fish for them. Or the "grab-bag" idea is not a bad one. But I have told you enough for this time, so I will just wish you all the merriest kind of a Christmas, and let you do the rest of the talking this month yourselves.

Dear Aunt Minerva:—I live in a little town called Lakeville, it is situated in the western part of Plymouth Co., Mass. From the name of the town one couldn't help knowing there were lakes here, and there are several and one of them is Assawampset, which is the largest lake in Massachusetts. I live four miles from it. Papa has a sail boat on the lake, and summers we go there and have picnics. The population of Lakeville is about 1000. It contains one church and three chapels, two factories, one shoe and the other a nail factory which my father owns and runs; it is about a stone's throw from our house. We have no graded schools of any kind here, so for our high school education we have to go to the adjoining town (Middleboro) which is but three miles distant. I wonder how many of the cousins have been to old historic Plymouth where the Pilgrims landed in 1620? The sights are really worth going to see. I live within 30 miles of there. I have no pets only a bird dog of papa's, and he likes to be petted all the time. I am an only child and there are very few girls near me of my age (15) so sometimes I get lonely. Last March I saw an advertisement in a paper saying that if any one would send 10c. they could have 3 packages of flower seeds and COMFORT for three months. I sent and got them, and I like COMFORT so well that I shall subscribe for it when I can. I should like to correspond with some of the girl cousins. Your new niece,
MABEL OSBORNE, Lakeville, Mass.

You must have some fine times boating, Mabel. I wish I would be there to go with you, and especially when you are having a picnic on some specially fine day.

"I live in the garden spot of the world, where the flowers never cease to bloom; even at Christmas we can go into the woods and gather wild flowers to decorate and make honey-suckle. How many of you Maine cousins would like to see wild flowers Christmas? I think flowers are the most beautiful things on earth. I have a great many, our yard is crowded. I think COMFORT is the nicest little paper imaginable. I enjoy reading it ever so much. Will some of the cousins please send me all of the story, 'The Mysterious Twins,' up to the July number? I would be ever so much obliged, and return the papers if they don't want to give them away. Would like a girl correspondent about my age, which is 14, from Maine. Your loving niece,
FLOESSIE RANDALL, Faceville, Ga."



THE JOURNEY.

Flowers at Christmas, just think of it! Here we have only ice and snow out-of-doors, not even a green leaf except a few belated ones on the apple trees. To be sure, we have some flowers in the house, but even those look as if they knew it was winter outside.

"I live in the picturesque village of Ellenville, about 100 miles from N. Y. I study arithmetic, grammar, history and geography. We have speaking every two weeks here. We choose sides and then each side elects its president, vice-president, secretary and committee, and each party speaks every four weeks—don't you think that is a nice plan? We have three rooms in our school and two class-rooms. I would like to correspond with some of the cousins of my own age (15).
Your affectionate niece,
PEARL ARNOYS,
Box 77, Ellenville, Ulster Co., N. Y."

Kind Aunt Minerva:—My auntie is a subscriber to COMFORT and I see so many nice letters written by small cousins that I would like to join them. I reside in New Orleans or Crescent City, and it is a beautiful place. I attend the Phineas Institute and was given a silver medal for lessons and a premium for arithmetic at our commencement in June. I am in the country at present visiting my grandparents and have glorious times; we have such grand rides.
BERTHA BLOCH, 9 years old, Napoleonville, La.

Dear Auntie:—I have been reading the COMFORT for about 2 years, and am a dear lover of the paper. I think the children's column is just grand. I am a girl of 11 years. My father is a farmer, and we are very poor at present, and so much affliction in our family. I have a brother and sister. Sister is 28 years old and is totally blind, and brother is 16 and is very badly afflicted with his eyes and rheumatism in his limbs. He is not able to do very much work; he plays the accordion and mouth organ, and wants a fiddle very bad but we are not able to afford it. He has been so since 8 years of age. We live in the country and get very lonesome. Our nearest neighbor is 5 miles; our post-office is 5 miles. The railroad goes 100 rods from our house. It is very lonesome here, no one to see only as the train comes, and it only comes once a day. My brother would like some of the cousins to write to him and send him any little thing to pass away the time. ELLA KENDALL,
Rockham, Faulk Co., Dak.

You must indeed be very lonely, Ella. It seems terrible to us who live within a stone's throw of neighbors, to think of having none within five miles. I hope some of the young folks will write to Ella and her brother, and send them some good reading.

Dear Auntie and Cousins:—I live way down here in the Sunny South among the sweet-scented flowers and lofty pines. I do not live near any mountains, but I enjoy our sunny Southern home. I am corresponding with an Indian girl; she is 16 and I certainly enjoy reading her letters. I cannot praise COMFORT too highly. When I get a copy I do not stop till it gives me comfort by reading the newsy letters from the distant cousins. It is a nice little paper and well deserves the name of COMFORT. I have 2 little sisters. Two of us go to school at the institute in sight of our home. I am a farmer's daughter. My papa is 12 M. he and I write as many letters as I wish. I am a little bird, but don't let the owls know I can fly; I am afraid they might come after me. Papa plants cotton and any of the girl cousins (who have never seen any) who will correspond with me, I will send them enough to see what it is.
FLOESSIE BYRD, age 12,
Poe's Harnett Co., N. C.

My dear Aunt Minerva:—Will you please admit a 16 year old niece into your cozy corner? Dear Auntie, I want you to pay a kind word to the nice Editor of COMFORT for us children. Ask him if he won't please relinquish a whole page to us, young folks, to write upon; for I know we all love you as much as the big folks do, and expect more. We need attention, too. You needn't be afraid we will get cross at you for being garrulous. Because we like these loquacious, old aunties. Now, Auntie, I didn't mean to say you are old, for you look "awful nice and dodd" with your two solemn-looking owls sitting beside you in your picture. I don't like owls, for they make such ugly noise and scare me. I expect that's the reason Auntie keeps here, to scare us children away, but we won't heed. I must tell you of my home. I live in the beautiful country, about 5 miles from the city of Martinsburg. My teacher is from there, too. We all love her so much. It is the beautiful Shenandoah Valley in which I live, hemmed in by the Blue Ridge Mts. on the east and the Alleghenies on the west. The peaceful and pacific Potomac river is near here, also. I agree with you, dear little Zelma, about loving God's sweet little birds and His dear flowers. I have them around me all the time. I feel sorry for your poor mama in her affliction. But He doeth all things well, and He watcheth kindly over her with His dear and loving eye. I have dear parents, one brother and two sis-



THE END.

ters younger than I. I want to teach school next year. I wish all of the cousins were with me now while I am writing this. For it is too lovely in the country to-day. The sun is shining in all his glory upon me; and I am writing this out in the yard.
Your affectionate niece, VERNIE K. LEDANE,
Bedington, Berkeley Co., W. Va.

I think the Editor will have to enlarge COMFORT. Vernie, if he makes room for all the cousins who want to write. The older ones are constantly begging for more room. Some time we will ask him to issue a supplement, with nothing in it but letters; how would you like that?

Dear Auntie:—I will write about this beautiful "Prairie State," Illinois. It derived its name from "Illini," an Indian word signifying "superior men." Its inhabitants are called "Suckers." The first white man who ever set foot within the present boundary of the State was Nicholas Perrot, at Chicago, in 1671. I live 3 miles from the Illinois river, and 4 miles from Peoria. The country hereabout was formerly inhabited by several tribes of the Illinois Indians. We find many Indian relics, such as arrow-heads, axes, drills, etc. I have about 500 arrow-heads, of which I have sent you one, which I hope you will accept. I want all the cousins to write to me about their State, etc. I am your humble nephew, age 15,
FRED LUX, East Peoria, Ill.

Thank you very much for the arrow-head, Fred; it was an unusually fine specimen. I omitted your offer, in printing your letter, as I knew you would be deluged with requests, and would rue the day you made it.

"Auntie, will you admit a farmer's daughter among your band? I am 16 years of age. I love to read the cousins' letters. My brother has 2 squirrels; he is going to tame them; they will sit on his lap and eat apples, hickory nuts, peas and other things. We keep them in a large box so that they cannot get away. I do not spend much time with pets, for I can plow, drag, bind grain, pitch hay and do many other things, so you see I am quite busy. I do housework when I have the time.
Your niece,
MARY STORR, Seneca, Wis."

No more room for us this time. I shall hope to hear from ever so many about the way you spent Christmas.
Your, AUNT MINERVA.

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An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who wish it, this recipe in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing, with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

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DECEMBER is again with us, the merriest month of the whole year. Thanksgiving has gone and left many with a bad case of dyspepsia from overeating, but they will recover in time for Christmas dinner, and New Year's calls. In another department for November was taken up the theme of Thanksgiving, and it was well treated. We surely can all of us take a lesson from the good words there said. Christmas is always a new theme for writers and will never grow threadbare as long as there are any children in this good world of ours. And how happy we can all make our homes with remembrances to our friends at this season, be they never so small. Do not allow yourselves to think a small gift will not be appreciated. As it is not the value which is cherished by most people, it is the pleasure of having been remembered.

Do not allow Grandpa and Grandma to sit in the corner and see all enjoying the gifts from friends and they have nothing at all, scrip the young people, for they have many years in prospect to enjoy life. Whereas the dear old grandparents may be with you for the last time on this merry Christmas day.

And in playing your pleasant games in the evening, invite them to join you and also ask them to suggest some of the old games played when they were children and see with what joy they will join in the sport, and in many instances the pleasure afforded by them will be far in excess of anything you could have imagined. If not too old they can most always dance and sing and will enjoy giving the children a few selections from the "old time melodies," such as were popular when they had singing school at the corner, and all the musical instrument was a tuning fork in the hand of the leader. And now that I am on the subject of songs what can be more uncertain and inexplicable than the popularity of a song just out. Bill Nye can write a popular article for a newspaper, but no writer can sit down and write a popular song. As an instance of this, the now popular song "Marguerite" lay around in the music stores for many months, and nobody bought it. One morning, however, the young man who wrote and composed it found himself famous. So it has been with less deserving songs, such as "McGinty" and "Annie Rooney." There is nothing in either of them to give them their unearned popularity, yet they became very popular. But the One song of to-day—"Comrades"—is deservedly so. The music is good, and the chorus is fine, and the run of the whole has the merit of good sense. It is not only the music or words of the song which give it worth, the beautiful mingling of two natures in the sentiment of the song arouses us to think and feel that whatever our situation, there remains that love of companionship which is so strong in every human heart. It is a simple story simply told of the companionship from boyhood of two friends, how they became necessary to each other's existence all through life. When one joined the army the other followed. They are ordered far away to distant lands, no difference, they are together. In a fierce battle a savage aims a poisoned spear at the breast of one, the other steps in and receives the death blow in his own heart. That covers the whole story, and tells the tale of many of our brave boys in blue and gray in the late war. I will only make room for the chorus this time, as I think it fully expresses that spirit of comradeship which should exist in us all. It is as follows:

Comrades, comrades, ever since we were boys,
Sharing each other's sorrows, sharing each other's joys;
Comrades when manhood was dawning, faithful whatever might betide,
When danger threatened my darling old comrade was there by my side.

The song was introduced to America by Bessie Bonehill a year ago. It instantly became popular, and has since been sung by every one, to the exclusion of nearly every other song.

The publishers of COMFORT wishing to have every one of their five million readers learn this popular song, have secured it and are sending it out with about twelve dozen other songs absolutely free as a Christmas and New Year's present to all subscribers for renewing or extending their subscription for another year, which calls for only 25c. you know and gives you twelve more happy months of COMFORT. What a fine Christmas present, indeed! Send them the 25c. and secure this beautiful collection and COMFORT for a whole year. If you are a subscriber for a year, send it to some friend as a present. And you surely will afford that friend untold pleasure for the next twelve months.

Do not let the good times stop with Christmas but go on with the merry-makings until Dame Nature shall again come forth in her gorgeous robes of emerald to call us out to duties which we must perform in the long summer days.

The prize album has been awarded to Miss Josephine Puenteuer, Ventura, California, and I do wish you could see the letter of this little Swiss girl who has only been in America a few years, and does not have the privilege of attending school, but must help herself to learn our language as best she may. I cannot speak in too great praise of the beautiful letters I am receiving daily, they are some of them equal to the best I have ever seen, but little Josephine's letter is almost perfect, and I sincerely trust she will enjoy the album, and go on improving in our ways and language, and she is sure to be a noble woman.

I have so many questions on hand this month I am hardly able to decide on the ones which should have the space, and in making my decision I have selected those which I think will be of the most general use to my many young friends, and first on the list comes Irwin C. Lake Fork, Ills., with "What are the qualifications necessary to become a successful shorthand writer, time required to learn, wages usually paid, and what are the chances of obtaining employment after one has become com-

petent?" In reply, the first requisite is a moderately good education, and a general knowledge of the usual forms of speech used by men in business correspondence, a quick ear and an amiable disposition. The time required to learn depends on the close attention to the work. I should think with your command of language and good penmanship you could learn much and gain great headway in six months. The pay is generally very good and the positions and surroundings almost invariably pleasant. In a city there is a good prospect at almost all seasons of the year, and a competent stenographer or typewriter need not be idle if he or she can fill the bill as above. Of course there are many incompetent ones in the field but they soon go the rounds and the faithful and painstaking win the lucrative positions, and this profession is like all others, "What is worth doing, is worth doing well." The only way to improve one's handwriting is to practice. Never allow an opportunity to practice slip by you, and learn the muscular movement described in all compendiums.

JOHN D. G., Navarro, Texas.

My information regarding the convict miners of Tennessee is very meagre, and I can only answer your very interesting letter in a general way. I regret that I have not space for the letter here. I can only say, there can be little doubt that the arrangement which places one man or any number of men at the entire disposal and control of another, subject to his absolute and irresponsible will and power, is a system of things not the most favorable to moral excellence, whether of the master or the convict. The exercise of such authority must, in the nature of the case, tend to foster a spirit of brutality and force. There is in all cases of this nature a strong tendency to abuse the power we have over those who dare not resist. We certainly expect to find in connection with such a civil polity, a state of morals somewhat peculiar, acts of violence not infrequent, the animal appetites unrestrained, and I fear the system is a pernicious one, where the criminals are used as slaves were in former days. May we soon see a radical change in the state of affairs now existing.

One of the Southern born boys asks about our Northern cranberries, and if they would flourish in a Southern climate. I do not see why they should not, the most favorable location for their cultivation being where the soil is wet and swampy for several feet in depth, and where the water stands 4 to 6 inches over the ground a large portion of the time, and can be easily drained off the land to the depth of at least one foot, select thrifty plants from a good nursery and when the worms attack them, flow the land with water which will at once destroy them. Send me a few quarts from your bog next fall and I can then tell you if you were successful.

Ethel D. W., Whatcom, Wash., asks what constitutes or makes a place of worship. The worship of the Supreme Being seems to be an instinctive principle, an impulse of our nature, a law of the soul. Whoever builds an altar, or in the silent recesses of his heart breathes a prayer; whoever bows himself toward the rising sun, or stretches forth his hand in supplication toward the moon walking in her brightness, or the stars that gem the brow of night; whoever calls upon an unknown God, or worships the invisible spirit that filleth immensity with his presence, and is not far from every one of us, is but acting in accordance to the impulse and instinct of his nature, and needs no place of worship built with hands, in order to flitly offer up his thanks and praises.

EDDIE J. L., Culbertson, Ga.

Yes, there is a process by which you can make pencil writing almost as indelible as ink. It is to press on the pencil rather hard in writing and then either pass the tongue over the same, or breathe slowly on the paper after writing. This has been tried many times by persons using a book a long time and in which the leaves are liable to be rubbed together, causing the writing to become defaced by the diffusion of the lead over the paper. A trial of this simple experiment will readily convince you of its utility.

I have a large number of letters this month again asking how to write a business letter, and as we are giving a good amount of space each month to this subject a few words here will not be amiss and will serve to answer many letters.

1st. Use the fewest words which will clearly convey your meaning.

2d. Write plainly. Fancy penmanship is often unreadable, and it is better to write legibly, even if you think plain letters not so handsome.

3d. When ordering goods state carefully what articles you want and how much is enclosed.

4th. In replying to a letter always mention at the beginning that it is in reply to such a letter and here mention particulars.

5th. Always read your letter before enclosing it to be sure you have said all you wanted to say.

6. If money is to be enclosed, be sure it is, seal securely and direct plainly. If the firm to whom you have written does not in due time respond, in justice to yourself and him you should write for an explanation. State when you wrote, what you wrote for, amount if not filled it, it is impossible to investigate the matter in an establishment of any size. Do not call a merchant a swindler even if you think so, but give him a chance to make an explanation, and in many cases you will save yourself the necessity of an apology.

MOLLIE E. B., Calooga, Miss.

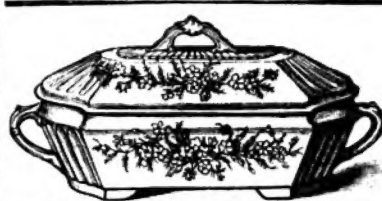
It is certainly in order for you to ask any questions you desire, and I promise you I will give you the answers to the best of my ability. Dixie is an imaginary place somewhere in the Southern States of America, celebrated in a popular Negro melody as a perfect paradise of luxurious ease and enjoyment. The term is often used as a collective designation of all the Southern States. It originated many years ago when slaves were owned in New York. A certain man named "Dixie" owned large tracts of land and many slaves, and when abolition grew stronger they emigrated South and the Negroes always looked upon him and his possessions as a sort of paradise, and in their natural songs they have immortalized his name.

EMMA De V., Clinton, Ind.

"The weeping philosopher" is an epithet applied to Heraclitus, a native of Ephesus, who flourished about 500 years B.C. He was of a gloomy and melancholy disposition, and is said to have been perpetually shedding tears on account of the vices of mankind.

Now before I see your happy faces again we will have had Christmas and all its joys and pleasures. New Years with its good resolves, so many only made to be broken. And in all these good times won't you all remember and try to increase your own happiness by doing something to make someone else happier, if only by a few kind words and a share of the good things given you by indulgent parents and friends, and let each day's descending sun be the witness of some kind action done. Keep up your interest in our meetings and address all your letters to Your loving,

UNCLE JOSEPHUS, (Care of COMFORT.)



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DEAR COUSINS:

I shall take it for granted that all of you know just how to cook the Christmas roast beef, or to stuff that fat turkey or goose which will grace your table. So I will not give you any instructions in that line at all. But on Christmas eve, when all the children are at home, you will want to have a "candy daub;" and so this is just the time to give some nice receipts which one of the cousins sent long ago.

PEANUT CANDY.

Prepare the meats by removing the reddish skin, and fill a tin to the depth of about one inch. Boil 2 pounds of brown sugar, 1-2 pint of water and 1 gill of good molasses until it thickens. Pour the hot candy on the meats. When nearly cold divide into squares.

MARSH MALLOW.

Dissolve 1 pound of clean gum arabic in 1 quart of water, strain; add 1 pound of refined sugar and place over a fire, stirring continually until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture has become of the consistency of honey; next add gradually the whites of 8 eggs, well beaten, stirring the mixture all time until it loses its stickiness and does not adhere to the fingers when touched. Pour into a pan dusted with flour or starch, when cool divide into small squares. Before turning out the paste it should be flavored, rose is usually employed.

JUBBER PASTE.

Take of gum arabic 1 pound, dissolve in a pint and a half of water and add 1 pound of sugar. Cook to a thick consistency, and when cooled a little flavor, and then turn into shallow tin pans that have been buttered.

CHOCOLATE CREAM DROPS.

Prepare a cream as follows: Take the white of 1 egg, beat to a froth, adding an equal bulk of water at the last. Into this stir enough sugar to make a doughy mass sufficiently firm to be handled. Powdered sugar should be used. Place on a buttered tin and allow to harden a little after making into the desired shapes. Now place a cake of the best plain chocolate in a saucepan—a double boiler is the best. No water is needed, as the chocolate will slowly melt and become a thick fluid. Now introduce the balls of cream, one or two at a time, and roll in the chocolate for a moment until entirely covered.

Egg stains on silver can be taken off with table salt and a wet rag. Salt sprinkled over anything that is burning on the stove will prevent any disagreeable odor.

Grease may be removed from silk by applying magnesia to the wrong side. Blossom.

I will add to these a few of my own favorite receipts.

TAFKY.

One cup sugar, 1 cup molasses, 1-2 cup vinegar, 1-2 cup butter. Boil till butter when dropped in water, cool in a buttered tin and break into pieces.

SUGAR CANDY.

Two cups sugar, 1-3 cup water, 2 tablespoons vinegar, butter size of small egg, 1 tablespoon glycerine. Boil without stirring over a slow fire, until it will crack when cooled in water. Pull without buttering the hands, adding any flavor preferred. It may be divided into several parts, and different flavors pulled in. Open the lump of candy and drop in the flavoring, then double together and pull.

CHOCOLATE CARAMELS.

One and one-half cups sugar, 1 1-2 cups molasses, 1 cup sweet milk, 2 squares chocolate, 1-2 cup butter, 2 tablespoons corn starch. Stir occasionally to prevent burning.

SHERBET.

Two cups sugar, 2-3 cup molasses, 1-2 cup milk, 2 squares chocolate. Boil until it is hard in water, not brittle. Add a large piece of butter, and a pinch of salt when almost done. Flavor with vanilla. Remove from fire, beat until it shows signs of sugaring, then pour out quickly.

Perhaps some of you are tired of your way of making plum pudding, and would like to try a new receipt. I find one among some which have been sent by an old contributor.

PLUM PUDDING.

Cream together 1-2 cup each of butter and sugar, add 2 eggs well beaten, 1-2 cup each of sour milk and molasses. Add one large cup of fruit, currants or raisins; for spices, 1-2 teaspoonful each of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and pimento; dissolve a teaspoonful of soda in a very little water and add with flour to make a rather stiff batter, not quite as thick as cake. Steam about 4 hours, a pinch of salt will add to the flavor. These puddings will keep a week and are nearly as good cold, or warmed over as when new. To be eaten with sauce or not, as liked.

CREAM PUDDING SAUCE.

Beat 1-2 cups of sugar with 1-2 cup nice fresh butter to a foamy cream, which will require about 20 minutes, add a well beaten egg and flavoring to taste just before it is wanted, beat into the sauce 3 tablespoonfuls of boiling water, stir rapidly to prevent curdling.

MOLASSES OR VINEGAR SAUCE.

Take 1-2 cup molasses, stir in a rounding tablespoonful of flour, and about 1-2 cup of hot water, or enough to thin it. Set on stove, add a piece of butter as large as half an egg. Let it simmer slowly until it thickens a little, perhaps about 15 minutes, remove from the stove and add 2 tablespoonfuls of vinegar and a little nutmeg.

VARIETY PUDDING.

One cup bread crumbs, 1 large cup thick tart apple sauce, 1 egg, 1-2 cup sugar, a small piece of butter, 1-2 cups sweet milk, bake and serve with cream sauce.

OUSTARD PUDDING.

Two eggs, 11-2 pints sweet milk, 1 teaspoon butter, a pinch of soda, 1 large cup of cake crumbs, and 1 tablespoonful of sugar, flavor to taste, beat the eggs with the sugar, then add the other ingredients and bake rather slowly for about 3-4 of an hour. Reserve the white of one egg, beat to a stiff froth, add 2 teaspoons sugar and 1-2 teaspoon lemon, let the pudding cool, and spread, return to the oven, brown slightly, and cool again before serving.

I think the receipt for Wedding Cake in the April number an excellent one, and a good cake for young and old, married persons to have.

Mrs. LINNIE WEBBER,
East Sullivan, Maine.

Do you have soup with your Christmas dinner? Here are some ways of making it.

SAGO SOUP.

Wash 3 ounces of sago in boiling water and add gradually to 2 quarts of nearly boiling stock with seasoning to taste. Simmer for half an hour, when it should be well dissolved; beat up the yolks of 3 eggs, add them to half a pint of milk or cream, stir quickly into the soup and serve immediately. Do not let the soup-boil after the eggs are put in, or it will curdle.

PEA SOUP.

Use 1 pint of dried peas for every 4 quarts of soup, wash the peas well, then put them in 6 quarts of cold water, let them come slowly to a boil, add meat with a carrot and an onion, simmer for 3 hours, strain the soup through a sieve, place on the fire again, and put in 1 tablespoon of flour, and the same of butter mixed together. Brown some bread crumbs in the oven, put them in a tureen and pour the soup over them.

HICKORY NUT CAKE.

Half a cup of butter, same of milk, 1 cup sugar, 2 of flour, 2 teaspoonfuls of baking powder, 1 heaping cup of raisins, 2 eggs, and 1 large cupful of hickory nut meat chopped very fine.

QUICK LOAF CAKE.

One cup sugar, 1 cup shortening half lard half butter, 1 cup milk, 1 teaspoonful soda, 2 teaspoonfuls cream of tartar, half a teaspoonful each of nutmeg and cinnamon, 1 cup each of raisins and flour.

Mrs. A. S. MOREY.

For a side dish you will want some

SCOLLOPED OYSTERS.

Cover the bottom of the pan or dish that you wish to cook them in (have it well buttered) with fine bread crumbs, and sprinkle over them many bits of butter, some salt and pepper. Lay on this a layer of oysters and so on until the pan is full as you like. Pour in a tea-cupful of oyster liquor. Sprinkle over the last layer of oysters, bread crumbs, butter, pepper and salt, and pour over that a tea-cupful of rich sweet cream. Wherever the bits of butter occur, let them be large bits, for oysters need nothing so liberally as butter; it seems to develop their flavor perfectly. Bake the top brown. Send to table immediately, do not let them stay in oven too long; overcooking is as bad as too little butter, either ruins them.

M. L. AMASON.

Then for tea make an

ALMOND CAKE.

One cup white sugar, 11-2 cups sweet cream, 1 tablespoon butter, 11-2 cups flour, 11-2 cups blanched almonds, 2 teaspoonfuls baking powder, whites of 4 eggs beaten stiff. Bake in one loaf.

ETHEL.

Or try some of the following good receipts:

DRIED APPLE FRUIT CAKE.

Soak 3 cupfuls of dried apples over night in cold water enough to swell them, chop them in the morning, and put them on the fire with 3 cups of molasses; stew until almost soft, add a cupful of nice raisins (seedless if possible) and stew a few moments, when cold add 3 cupfuls of flour, 1 cupful of butter, 3 eggs and 1 teaspoonful of soda; bake in a steady oven. This will make 2 good sized panfuls of splendid cake. The apples will cook like citron and taste deliciously. Raisins may be omitted also spices to taste may be added. This is not a dear but delicious cake.

One of the cousins asked for the receipt for ginger snaps; here is mine, for

BAKER'S GINGER SNAPS.

Boil all together the following ingredients: 2 cups of brown sugar, 2 cups of cooking molasses, 1 cup of shortening, (which should be part butter) 1 large tablespoonful of ginger, 1 tablespoonful of ground cinnamon, 1 teaspoonful of cloves, remove from the fire and let it cool. In the meantime sift 4 cups of flour and stir part of it into the above mixture. Now dissolve a teaspoonful of soda in a tablespoonful of warm water and beat into this mixture. Stir in the remainder of the flour and make stiff enough to roll into long rolls about 1 inch in diameter and cut off from the end into half inch pieces, place them on well buttered tins, giving plenty of room to spread in a moderate oven, let them cool before taking out of the tins.

DOMINOES.

Have a plain cake baked in rather thin sheets, and cut into small oblong pieces the same shape as a domino, but a trifle larger. Frost the top and sides. When the top frosting is hard, draw the black lines and make the dots with a small brush dipped in melted chocolate. These are very nice for children's parties.

Mrs. P. W. QUICKBOERNER,
Grantsdale, Mont.

The children will be pleased with little cakes ornamented with the fancy figures and candies which may be bought at the confectioners. Any plain cake receipt, the simpler the better, will answer for this purpose. Frost them with boiling water and powdered sugar, beaten together with a silver knife until it will drop readily from the knife (not run in a stream, but drop in detached pieces.) This is simple and easily made.

These receipts will do for this month, and sweeten you up thoroughly. A Merry Christmas to all from your

COUSIN CERES.

HOW I MADE \$100.

My cousin in Pa., wrote me of his success plating knives, forks and spoons. I bought a \$5 outfit from H. F. Delno & Co. of Columbus, Ohio. It plates with gold, silver or nickel. It plates watches and jewelry splendidly. I made \$100 in one month. I can sell a number of platers now and get all the plating I can do at home. This may not interest you Mr. Editor, but many readers may be glad to learn of a chance to make money.

Yours truly,
FRED. EARL.

Free Photos.

We have some elegant Photos of prominent places which we are going to give away to introduce our new Giant Catalogue of Novelties. We will send an assorted collection to any one who will enclose a 2c. stamp for postage on same.

W. MORSE & Co., Augusta, Maine.

CANDY GOOD We will give free to every boy or girl in the United States who will do us a slight favor, 4 1/2 Pounds of Candy, French Mixed, Broken and Chocolate Creams. It will not cost you a single cent; we just give it to you for advertising purposes, and we send it prepaid anywhere in the U.S. If you never had as much candy as you wanted all at one time this is your great big chance to get it free. It will be great for Christmas, if you don't eat it before. If you want it send us your name and address at once **TO BOYS GOOD** **BOYS** WESTERN PEARL CO., Chicago, Ill.

CARDS! New Sample Book 2c. U.S. CARD CO. Cadiz, O

YOUR FUTURE REVEALED. Written prediction of your life, 10c. Give date of birth. Astrologer, Box 326, Kansas City, Mo.

Fill Your OWN Teeth with Crystalline. Stops Pain and Decay. Lasts a Lifetime. Circular Free. T. F. TRUMAN, M.D., Wells Bridge, N. Y.

18 SQUARE Inches Old Gold, Red, Blue, Pink or White Satin, all stamped, suitable for Pin Cushions, Baskets, etc., sent for 10 cents silver. MILLINER, Box A Augusta, Maine.

DEAFNESS & HEAD NOISES CURED by Peck's Invisible Tubular Ear Cushions. Winners heard. Successful when all remedies fail. Sold FREE only by F. Huxco, 553 B'way, N.Y. Write for book of proof.

CURES in 3 to 10 DAYS. Tender Feet. Does not close the pores. No powder. Sold by druggists. By mail 50 cts. 2 ct. stamp for Treatise. THE WILSON DRUG CO., Greeley, Colo.

\$80 A MONTH and expenses paid any active person to sell goods \$40 a Month to distribute circulars Salary paid monthly. Sample of our goods and contract free. Send 10c. for postage, packing etc. WE MEAN BUSINESS UNION SUPPLY CO. 26 & 28 RIVER ST. CHICAGO ILL.

DOUBLE GUNS Breech-Loader \$7.99. RIFLES \$2.00. PISTOLS 75c. All kinds cheaper than elsewhere. Before you buy, send stamp for catalogue to THE POWELL & CLEMENT CO., 166 Main St., Cincinnati, O.

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NOVELTIES We save you many dollars yearly for 25 cents. Will mail an article that will do as we say or money refunded. A useful present with each article. AGENTS WANTED DePODE & CO., 221 Fifth Ave. Chicago.

LADIES who will do writing for me at their own home will make good wages. Address with self-addressed, stamped envelope, MISS EDNA L. SMYTHE, South Bend, Ind., proprietor of the FAMOUS GLORIA WATER for the complexion.

A SELF-MOVING LOCOMOTIVE 12 CENTS. Handsomely finished, made of metal, strong wheels, gilt boiler, black smoke stack, bright colored cab with four windows. When wound up runs a long distance across the floor. Great amusement to children. By far the cheapest locomotive made, and a marvel of strength and beauty. Parents should buy one for the children. Price, 12 cents; three for 30 cents, postpaid. BOSTON NOVELTY CO., Box 1540, BOSTON, MASS.

All Frontier Adventure Gathered into One Book. OUR PIONEER HEROES AND THEIR DARING DEEDS. Thrilling exploits of all American border heroes with Indians, outlaws and wild beasts, from earliest times. Boone, Kenton, Brady, Crockett, Carson, Custer, Comstock, Buffalo Bill, Gen. Miles, Geronimo, Sitting Bull, Indian Chiefs, the Ghost-Dancers War, etc. 230 pages. Engravings. Boys not and Home F. Pubs., Box 7361, St. Louis or Philadelphia. Please mention COMFORT when you write.

FREE SILVER SPOONS To introduce my goods quickly I make this liberal offer: I will give any lady One Dozen Tea Spoons, Heavy Silver plated, latest artistic design, warranted to wear, who will dispose of 1 dozen boxes of Hawley's Corn Salve (warranted to cure) among friends, in a box. I ask no money in advance, simply send me your name; I will mail you the silver spoons paid. When sold you send me the money and I will mail you the 1 dozen handsome Tea Spoons. If you find you can't sell salve, I take it back. I run all the risk. Address R. HAWLEY, Chemist, Berlin, Wisconsin. Please mention COMFORT when you write.

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LOVELY WOMAN! A GOOD Complexion is Woman's Greatest Blessing! How can you tolerate Freckles, Pimples, Blackheads, Yellow or Muddy Skin, Moth, Wrinkles, Red Nose, or any form of facial disfigurements, when by using DR. BOTOT'S COMPLEXION WAFERS you can possess a BEAUTIFUL FORM, BRILLIANT EYES and a LOVELY COMPLEXION.

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Royal Crimson Silk Velvet Plush Smokers' Companion. It is 12 in. long, 6 in. wide, 2 in. thick; the inside is decorated in a most artistic manner with lovely blue silk and contains one genuine chip meerschaum pipe, the bowl is in shade of chips of genuine meerschaum. A magnificent pipe, having a patent stem and genuine amber mouthpiece, with silver plated mounting; can be taken apart to clean, and is never sold by tobacconists for less than two dollars. Also contains cigar holder made of genuine meerschaum with genuine amber mouthpiece that is worth half a dollar. The case on the outside is covered with genuine crimson silk velvet plush; such cases have been selling for as much as \$10. To introduce we will send you our royal crimson silk velvet plush smokers' companion for only 98c. Charges all prepaid and satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. This offer is made only to those who will endeavor to introduce our goods, otherwise we charge \$3. Send \$3. and this ad. to WM. WILLIAMS, 125 S. Halsted St. Chicago, Ill.

More Money is Made every year by Agents working for us than by any other company. Why don't you make some of it? Our circulars which we send Free will tell you how. We will pay salary or commission and furnish outfit and team free to every agent We want you now. Address Standard Silver Ware Co. Boston, Mass.

WE PAY EXPRESS CHARGES. IT'S FREE! to examine

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This beautiful miniature UPHOLSTERED PARLOR SET of three pieces (for the next 60 days) will be sent to any address on receipt of 95 cents to pay for express, packing, advertising, etc. This is done as an advertisement and we shall expect every one getting a set to tell their friends who see it where they got it and to recommend our house to them. This beautiful set consists of one sofa and two chairs. They are made of fine just-our metal frames, beautifully finished and decorated, and upholstered in the finest manner with beautiful plush (which we furnish in any color desired). To advertise our house, for 60 days, we propose to furnish these sets on receipt of 95 cents. Postage stamps taken. No additional charge for box or shipping; order immediately. No attention paid to letters unless they contain 95 cents.

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BY JOHN S. GREY.

Christmas, which is supposed to bring to everybody everywhere the best of good cheer whether it is desired or not, found the quiet town of Tattleback fully prepared to enjoy the blessings of the season. Caleb's political club intended to celebrate the festival with a spirit (of an alcoholic nature), but the ladies of the Teatable club set to work with a will to ensure an extraordinary good time in a quiet sort of way, by enjoying themselves thoroughly while setting an example to the rest of the population.

Members were notified that the December or Christmas gathering, would be celebrated in an unusual manner, and invitations were extended to all members to bring friends with them. Many of the ladies were busily employed for days previous in contriving and arranging all kinds of decorations for the club rooms, and, from the worthy President down to Bridget, everyone seemed more than ordinarily interested. Miss Wing had written some violet tinted poetry of the "sawed off in the middle" order, and had interwoven the words with some wool into a variety of striking couplets for the walls. Here are a few of them:

"The club presents its compliments
To all the friends of temperance,"
in woolen letters faced the entrance to the reception room, and at once bespoke the principles of the club and the class of visitors that were welcome to its portals. Over the mantel-piece of the reception room was to be seen

"We'll guarantee you perfect cheer
Without ale, whisky, wine or beer."
Miss Wing prided herself considerably upon some of these "laconics," as she called them, and drew especial attention to one of them, reading:

"Ladies! pause upon the brink—
Wed no man who's fond of drink!"
which was intended for the particular benefit of the maiden members of the club who might be, or were waiting to be, tempted into matrimony.

And, twisted over the chandelier in the centre of the reception room was a large bunch of holly and mistletoe, though, as Mrs. Traggie facetiously remarked, she could not see why the latter was there, inasmuch as the male sex being prohibited admission, it could not be put to its traditional use. In the meeting room the following couplets were to be found ornamenting the walls:

"This is the season for joyous greeting,
And thus we greet you who come to meeting,"
adjoining this was the euphonious card:

"Let us hope that each December
Brings good luck to every member,"
and this inscription gave universal satisfaction:

"We're Tattleback ladies, determined to win
Our battle 'gainst whisky, rum, brandy and gin!"
Behind the President's chair was suspended a pretty conceit of Miss Wing's:

"Dorothy Cripps, our President
Unquestionably competent!
May the club which she will nourish
Be a striking one, and flourish!"

It had been unanimously agreed by those in authority that the Christmas meeting should be of longer duration than usual, and that a slight repast should be served at the opening of the proceedings, while a more substantial meal should terminate the evening. Thus, when the members and friends were seated at the different tables, Bridget was in her element. She was not only a good waitress, custom made, but



She was here, there and everywhere—the most ubiquitous individual in the club. It really seemed as if she had many pairs of hands, so nimble were they in pouring out tea and coffee, opening bottles of ginger ale, and passing cake, fruit, and sandwiches to the assembled guests. Bridget wore her best Christmas smile and an apron to match, while a general festive air pervaded her costume and manner. She laughed so frequently that it was with difficulty she could get her face straight between smiles, and the echoes of her laughter had not time to leave the building before she burst out afresh.

It was after the ladies had concluded their eating and drinking that the crowd adjourned to the meeting room for business, and Dorothy having rapped for silence began to speak. Her remarks in brief were as follows:

"My friends, at this glorious holiday season, when man and womankind are privileged more than at any other time, to rejoice and give themselves up to pleasure, it is but proper that an institution like our own should observe the occasion fittingly, not simply by the outward display of decorations and emblems, but in the higher sense of feeling and doing good to our fellow creatures. There are fortunately in our town, few that are very poor, and none that are starving, but many to whom a little fruit or other luxury would be a great boon. We have glorious examples before us of what has been done from time immemorial in the way of giving to the poor at Christmas time, and I think I but foreshadow the sentiments of the club when I propose that, while we are transacting ordinary business, Bridget shall be instructed to gather up the fragments of our repast and take them down to the Widow Duckworth and her five little children." (Hear, hear.) "All in favor of this proposition say 'Aye!'"

(A spontaneous aye from the assemblage.)
"All opposed to the proposition say 'No!'"
The silence was more painfully quiet than Philadelphia—there was no "no" noticeable from Tattleback ladies on a question of that character, or possibly the dissentient would have been recommended for expulsion.

So Bridget's smile broadened out behind each ear as she loaded up a basket with all manner of good things, and started off down the village street in the direction of the widow's cottage. When she was gone Mrs. Rubenstein rose and said:

"Ladies, I had mit me brought somedings vich I know efery one of our sex cannot much do mitout alretty, I great pleasure had in presenting dot mirror the corner in to do members."

And lo, when the ladies looked into the corner where Bridget had just left, they found she had uncovered a large swing mirror which had been concealed with a tablecloth. For Bridget had been in the secret with Mrs. Rubenstein, but was absent when the presentation was made.

There were many cries of approval of this latest gift to the club, and Miss Wing immediately proposed that a formal vote of thanks be tendered Mrs. Rubenstein, and that the facts be duly recorded in writing in the transactions of the society, which be-

ing done, the little schoolmistress took her position in front of the mirror and began to arrange her hair. "Ladies," she said presently, raising her voice loud enough to attract general attention, "though standing before the mirror you will allow that I am



CASTING NO REFLECTION

when I say that Mrs. Rubenstein's gift is like her daughter—a very good looking lass indeed!"

"What a horrible pun!" whispered Selina to Maria Pullet.

"Yes, and it's a chestnut, too," answered Maria. "I used to make the same joke myself thirty—I mean thirteen years ago!"

Meanwhile Miss Rubenstein, a girl of about seventeen summers, and who had just graduated under Miss Wing's care, rose and simpered out an acknowledgment of the compliment in the most approved imported English.

Mrs. Pullet said she trusted that the officers would try to complete their business as rapidly as possible, because this being an extraordinary occasion, and the holiday season at that, it was intended to make the evening one of mirth rather than business.

This remark had the effect of expediting the small amount of business to be transacted, and just as Bridget returned with a happy face and the heartfelt thanks of Mrs. Duckworth, Mrs. Traggie had risen for the purpose of proposing the postponement of serious business until the next meeting, and giving themselves up to enjoyment for the rest of the evening.

Miss Wing was requested to sing an original ditty entitled:

THE MAN.

Who bothers every woman's life
To be a proud and happy wife,
Then gives her naught but care and strife?
A man.

Who swears he'll love her night and day,
And all her wishes will obey,
Yet after marriage holds his sway?
A man!

Who promises earth's great delights
When we've gone through the marriage rites,
Yet leaves us lonely many nights?
A man!

Who looks on us with silent scorn,
Who makes us often feel forlorn,
Who tells us lies night, noon and morn?
A man!

Then why should woman longer be
Plunged in such abject slavery,
While we've a chance of being free?
From man?

Let us stand for freedom make,
And show the man, for woman's sake,
That when he weds it's a mis-take.
For man!

If it had not been for the obvious meaning of the last line, Miss Wing's song would have been immensely popular, but the peculiar tune given to the ditty caused many members to remain silent in disgust. Mrs. Rubenstein then perpetrated a recitation which it would be simply useless to print without an explanatory key, but which hinged on a certain Gretchen whose lover, she considered, drank too much lager. The girl, not liking the beer-laden breath of her lover, explained to him that the best way to take his breath away was to eat raw onions and Limburger before he visited her. Mrs. Rubenstein's broken dialect, although imperfectly understood, was greatly relished by the audience, and yet no encore was called for.

Somebody caught sight of Bridget passing quietly through the room and she was immediately pressed for a song. Although she admitted that she used to sing well before tunes were introduced, she declined now on the pretext that her voice had got out of order and needed repairs. However, so many members insisted upon her singing, that she finally got up and gave, in a kind of subdued, second-hand basso profundo voice this song of

THE ROSCOMMON MAN.

There once was a man, and he lived in Roscommon,
From what I have heard his mother was a woman.
And if 'tis all true that I have been told,
Sure he once was an infant, but age made him old.
His face was the queerest that ever was seen,
It never got washed, so it never was clean,
He showed all his teeth when he wanted to grin,
And his mouth lay across 'twixt his nose and his chin.

Two legs he had got, for to make him complete,
And what was most strange, at the end was his feet.
If you'd seen him walking, you'd laugh till you'd burst—
For one leg or the other was sure to be first!

Now everyone knew that he never left dry ground,
And so great was his luck that he never got drowned,
For if ever this man had a river to cross,
If he couldn't get over—he'd stay where he was!

He did not live long ere arrested by death,
Sure the poor fellow died for the want of more breath.
And now that he lies in the churchyard to moulder
If he'd lived one day more—he'd have been a day older.

Bridget, it is needless to say, brought down the house, but all entreaties failed to get her to respond to the universal cry for an encore. She explained that she hadn't been heard in public before for many years, and did not think she would be heard again for a long time—not, in fact, until she got her voice in proper working order.

Then it was that, on motion of Martha Jagger, the whole assemblage rose and sang several hymns appropriate to the season, after which Bridget led the way to the most sumptuous repast of which the Tattleback Tea Table Club had yet partaken together. Turkey and cranberry sauce, cold chicken pate's, roast beef with an abundance of vegetables, and plenty of hot coffee, made the record, so far as gastronomic arrangements were concerned, the best ever known to the members.

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HE glad feast of Xmas-tide will soon be upon us and then for a brief time at least the world will put aside its schemes of self aggrandizement, halt in its pursuit of riches and lend attentive ear to that glorious message: "Peace on Earth Good Will to Men." The busy mart of commerce will be abandoned, the roar of the workshop will cease and the wheel will hang idle in the stream. This sweet respite will be but a brief one; but its wholesome effect upon the world will be most salutary. Xmas is pre-eminently a feast of hearts, of homes, of hearthstones. By its divine power all the world is resolved into one great family and Paul's words will be strikingly exemplified: For God hath made of one blood all nations of men. Above all is the Xmas feast the one glad festival of all the year which brings most delight to the hearts of the young. In the Divine Child all the world is born again and in that glorious regeneration the human heart parts with its selfishness, gives up its cold and calculating ways and loves without setting conditions. All the world is kin to the Christian at this glad season of the year and he is ready to open his gates to the stranger, to set forth a bountiful feast, and to carry cheer and comfort to every household where they are lacking. The world for good reason might surrender up all its holidays, were this sweet and comforting festival but left to it.

Oh bells of Xmas, fond and dear,
The night is spent, the morn is near.
Call all the world to set its gifts
Before His feet when daybreak lifts.

Even in the childhood of the world it was the custom to express love and devotion by means of gift-making. The idolater laid rich gifts in front of his graven image, the noble gave gifts to his prince, the peasant to his lord, the lover to his mistress, the slave to his master. But the gift was not only a token of reverence and respect, it was more, it was proof of the forgetfulness of self; it was a sacrifice, it was given freely and while it caused joy to the recipient, it purified, ennobled and strengthened the heart of the giver. The Old Testament is full of beautiful instances of gift-making, but not until the birth of the Divine Child did the world learn the full and deep import of gift-making as a means of lifting up the soul, of purifying the heart in the retort of unselfishness, of expressing a love too deep for words, a trustfulness beyond the power of language. For many centuries before the birth of our Saviour, the wise men of the East had searched most diligently for some cure for man's proneness to love himself better than his neighbor, for some method to touch the human heart and make all the world kin. But they had failed; their wisdom was great, yet they had toiled in vain and hence was it that when the star appeared in the December sky, they made haste to seek out the Divine Child, to open their treasures and lay before him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. These were the very first and most glorious of Xmas gifts. They had a deep and wonderful import. They were the first sign of the world's acceptance of the new faith and from that moment, a gift at Christmastime took on a sweet and holy significance. No other gift could ever hope to equal it in power to reach the human soul for its own good.

We are quite certain that the following little story will touch a sympathetic chord in the breasts of many of our readers. If it should succeed in having effect upon a single one of those good Christians who are too busy to think of their fellow creatures, it will not have been printed in vain. It is published now for the first time. The title of it is:

LITTLE TIM TUCKER'S XMAS.

Little Tim was an errand boy in the office of William Hollister, a wealthy banker in the city of C—. He had been there for nearly a year, for he had commenced work in January and it was now December. Tim was rather young to go to work, being only eight, but his father had died suddenly and there was no help for it, as there were two younger children than Tim and it was hard enough for his mother to support them. Tim was very proud to earn his own living and regularly every Saturday night he gave his mother the little envelope containing the four dollars. She never failed to kiss him and call him her "little man" and this made him still prouder. But there was one thing that made Tim unhappy at times and it was this: Mr. Hollister had never spoken a single word to him since he had been in his employment. True, Tim's duties never took him into the private office, but still it was necessary for Mr. Hollister to pass through the outer office to reach the private one, and Tim thought that it would only have been civil for Mr. Hollister to give a friendly nod and say good-morning once in a while. Well, it so happened that the very day before Christmas, the head clerk sent Tim into the private office for something; possibly the head clerk didn't think that Mr. Hollister was still there, for it was quite dark. But he was there; sitting at his desk with great piles of papers before him, looking terribly in earnest, he could not have looked more in earnest had he been reading his own death warrant. Tim looked at him and trembled and then made haste to get what he had been sent for; but just as he laid his hand on the door knob, a strange thought flashed across his mind. "Tomorrow," whispered Tim to himself, "will be Christmas. Why not wish Mr. Hollister a Merry Xmas?" Somehow or other, something gave the little fellow courage and facing about he looked straight at the rich banker and cried out in a chery voice:

"Merry Christmas Mr. Hollister!"

The banker never raised his eyes or moved a muscle. Tim was frightened half to death and shot out of the room all in a tremble.

"Good gracious," thought he. "What have I done? I've been very disrespectful; I'll be discharged. What a foolish boy I was!" When he reached home he was almost sick thinking over his rash act; but he took

good care not to let his poor mother know what he had done.

It was late that night when William Hollister entered the doorway of his spacious mansion in the upper part of the city. It had been a busy day with him, a certain piece of business had come into his hands by which he had made thousands of dollars, but in spite of this great good fortune, his big house seemed lonesome and dreary to him. He had several sons but they were not at home and after dinner as he and his wife sat down in front of the fire, his big house had never seemed quite so silent and lonesome to him. He fell into a doze for a few moments and then suddenly starting up as if he had been dreaming he called out:

"Wife, didn't you hear that? Who was that who wished me Merry Christmas?"

"Why, no one, husband, you have been dreaming," said Mrs. Hollister.

"No, no," cried the banker, "it can't be possible. I heard it so plainly, right here at my side, a child's voice, bright and cheery. Can it be possible I dreamt it? It sounded so natural, so sweet, so just like a boy! I can hear it yet saying: Merry Xmas, Mr. Hollister! Why, wife, it all comes back to me, 'twas Tim, yes, it was Tim!"

"Tim? Who is Tim?" asked Mrs.

Hollister.

"Why, one of the boys at the office. I remember now, he came into my private room this afternoon late, just when I was reckoning up our share of the profits in that hair contract. Yes, it all comes back to me, as he turned to leave the room he called out: 'Merry Xmas, Mr. Hollister!' I was adding up a column of figures, our net profits, ten thousand dollars. I took no notice of him. Yes, there's where I heard it, it must have come back to me just as I fell off asleep, the same bright, cheery, little voice: 'Merry Xmas Mr. Hollister!'"

"Why, where are you going husband?" asked Mrs. Hollister as he started for the door.

"To Tim's house!" was the reply. "I recollect where the Tucker's live. He was our old janitor," and before Mrs. Hollister could express her surprise at this sudden resolve, her husband had disappeared.

Tim sat rocking his little sister to sleep, almost asleep himself, when a knock startled him and as his mother opened the door and burst out "Mr. Hollister!" Tim's heart leaped into his throat. Throwing himself on his knees in front of the banker as the latter stepped into the room, Tim burst out with:

"Oh, Mr. Hollister, you have come to discharge me! I know you have! Oh forgive me this time, I'll never wish you Merry Xmas again, never, never, sir!"

"No, Tim," said the banker as he gently lifted the boy to his feet, "I have not come to discharge, I only dropped in to ask your pardon, Tim, for my rudeness this afternoon. I was very busy when you wished me a Merry Xmas, too busy for my own good (Tim couldn't understand this) and so I thought I'd call and wish you and your mother a Merry Christmas too, and here's a little present for you. Good-night."

It was a fifty dollar bill and you may think what a right Merry Xmas little Tim and his mother and sisters had that year, and here ends the story of "Little Tim Tucker's Christmas."

The most delightful characteristic of this festival of Xmas-tide, is that it is in a great degree the glorification of childhood. And why should it not be? Does it not commemorate the birth of the Divine Child and was He not throughout His life a most ardent lover of children? Did He not take them into His arms and bless them? Did He not warn His people that in order to be completely worthy to be enrolled as His followers they must become as little children, that they must have a simple and childlike faith in Him and in His doctrines, that they must be as it were, born again, that they must put away their so-called wisdom and sit at His feet as the child at its mother's? In a word, did He not when questioned as to who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, call a little child unto Him and having set him in the midst of them, exclaim: Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? But when once the dear Master no longer lingered among His followers to keep their faith childlike, to set up the sweet simplicity of His own character as a sampler for them, to preserve their hearts untouched by the vanities and weaknesses of the world, and more especially after the new faith began to outgrow its humble surroundings and

spread from land to land, marking its way by the building of proud temples and magnificent cathedrals and making its influence felt in every corner of the globe, then in those days of its grand triumphs, its glorious victories, did the haughty prelates forget that oft-repeated conjunction: Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven! The beautiful festival of the nativity of the Divine Child was in danger of losing much of its real loveliness as thoroughly and essentially a glad feast of childhood. What saved it from this fate, what gave back to it its full sweet significance? Who restored this fair Xmas-tide to its rightful owners—the children? Let us look into the matter.

Many, many hundreds of years ago, about five hundred after the coming of our blessed Saviour, there lived a good bishop in the far distant land of Asia Minor, by the name of Nicholas, and so good was he even from his babyhood, and so many virtues did he display as he grew to man's estate, that his fame spread far and wide as the good bishop and the consequence was that when he died the people grieved so for him that the church made a saint of him and he became Saint Nicholas. Now, you must know that this good bishop had, his whole life long, been specially kind and loving to young people, to children, to schoolboys. What a delightful idea it was that the boys and girls should have a saint of their own, to whom they might appeal when hard pressed with a difficult lesson or when threatened with the ferrule? How consoling it must have been to a band of little ones lost in the woods to know that good Saint Nick was watching over them? Well, it so happened by the very best fortune in the world that this good bishop Nicholas was born on the sixth day of December; the consequence was that his birthday was so near to that of our blessed Saviour's that gradually it came to be celebrated on the same day—a most fortunate thing for many of the nations of the globe—we among them, for this restored to Christmas time that beautiful characteristic of a children's feast day, a season at which to reward good children and encourage naughty ones to be better in the future. Xmas always had been a festival of good humor, good cheer and good feeling; but now it became a delightfully gay and happy one, well deserving of its new title Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! Could there be a more fitting word than "merry" to call it by? We throw not, and before we write any further let us set down something to amuse the little ones, to make them laugh, to remind them that Xmas-tide is a glad feast and a merry one!

This curious tale was written expressly for our young readers and is entitled:

THE MERRY, MERRY XMAS OF THE FULL-BEARDED BAKER.

On a bright Xmas morn, it was all the town's talk
A full-bearded baker went out for a walk.

He trudged across town,
Climbed up hill and down,

His bread for to sell and his rolls for to hawk.

Now a maiden he met on the round hill top,
Not a mile and a half from his own bake shop,

And he planted a kiss
On the cheek of the miss,

While down the hill basket rolled flippity-flop.

"A mad merry Xmas!" the baker he spake;
"How dare you bold baker such liberty take?"

She cried: "as I live
The kisses you give

Are by far not so nice as the kisses you bake."

The full-bearded baker thus did he impart:
"If only you'll promise to give me your heart."

The kisses I bake
Shall be yours to take,

My own and my dearest, till death us do part!"

Then the maiden she made him her prettiest bow
And vowed that she felt so—she didn't know how;

That same Xmas day
She pledged to obey

And a happier baker you couldn't find now!



"'Tis the merriest Xmas that ever I knew,"

Cries the full-bearded baker as his shop comes in view.

"The kisses I sell
Suit other folks well,

But give me those fashioned by me and by you!"

But, cry a hundred little voices tell us where
Santa Claus comes from! Well, dear children,
you must know that Santa Claus is no other
than the good bishop Nicholas by another
name, and this was the way it all came about:

When Nicholas the good bishop after his death had been made a saint, he became as all saints do, more popular in some countries than in others. This saint became a great favorite in the eastern countries particularly in Russia, where as you know they name almost every other child after him, and then his popularity spread through northern Europe and in Germany, the little tongues couldn't pronounce the long name Nicholas so they shortened it down to N'Klas or Klaus and when the good name and fame of the saint entered England, the children gave him his real little "Saint Klaus" or Santa Claus! Now you see plainly where Santa Claus came from. In England Saint Klaus or Santa Claus was a great favorite with the school children even hundreds of years ago, and when his birthday came around, some one of the teachers was dressed up in a bishop's garb, a long gown and a long white beard and he went about among the schools and into the houses, too, and distributed sugar plums, nuts covered with gold foil and knickknacks of many sorts among the good children, and then threatened the naughty ones with severe punish-

ishments. Now you may see too where our Santa Claus gets his quaint garb and long white beard from. Of course when the English settled our country they brought this charming old custom over with them, but they were not the only people to bring Saint Nick over to America, for the Dutch people who landed on Manhattan Island where the great city of New York now stands were extremely fond of Saint Nicholas and their descendants who now live on that island still keep the memory of the saint fresh and green in their hearts. It was a resident of New York who wrote that exquisite poem, almost as dear to American children as "Home Sweet Home," entitled "The Visit from St. Nicholas" and beginning:

"Twas the night before Xmas and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

Dear old Saint Nick, what happy days were those, those days of our youth, when the evil days came not and before the years drew nigh, when the fire blazed bright and warm on the old hearthstone and the children with parted lips and wide-opened eyes hung their stockings in the fireplace to be in readiness for the coming of the white-bearded Saint Nicholas! What blissful scenes were those when at day break the happy little faces were turned to catch proof of his having come down the chimney during the night to fill their stockings from his inexhaustible store! How true the poet's words: That heaven lies about us in our childhood! Come, then, dear season of love and good will, glad feast of hope and happiness, be with us like a star of promise, bring with thee balm for the bruised heart, comfort for the crushed soul; turn our thoughts away from self and fix them upon our neighbor and our



brother who have not found health and happiness in this world! Make us children again, that our faith may be acceptable to the Divine Child, whose birth the glad bells are now proclaiming to all the world!

At a very early age, the new faith adopted the music of bells as one of the very voices of the church, so much so that the bell came to stand almost as a symbol of Christianity, and when Mohammed established his religion he forbade its use and ordered his priests to cry out the hours of prayer from the tops of the mosques. It is no wonder that the early Christians felt their hearts so deeply touched by the ringing of bells. There is something strangely, sadly, beautifully sweet and tender about their tone. They speak to the very soul, their music seems at times to drop from heaven, so tender, so delicate, so mysterious is it; and yet can it also be deep and mournful, loud and threatening. In fact, the ringer can transmit his own soul into it, and toll for the dead or sing gladly at the approach of bride and groom. The sound of bells at Xmas-tide has ever been a comfort and a delight to the children of Christ, as they peal out in joyous song the tidings of the Saviour's birth! Hence is it most fitting that this Xmas greeting of ours should be ended by a peal from the lofty belfries where these mysterious instruments of sound hang with ready tongues and wide-opened mouths. At the beginning of this article we quoted a few verses from a poem entitled "The bells of Xmas-tide," written for our journal. Without a doubt our readers will be glad to read the entire poem. Here it is:

THE BELLS OF XMAS-TIDE.

Wake, bells of Xmas, sweet and mild,
In Bethlehem's manger lies the child.

Swing in the belfries where ye hide
And peal the merry Xmas-tide!

Call all the world to set its gifts
Before His feet when daybreak lifts.

Oh bells of Xmas, fond and dear,
The night is spent, the morn is near.

Swing in the belfries where ye hide,
Proclaim the glorious Xmas-tide!

Peal out the faith, ye bells of steel,
That valiant Christian soldiers feel.

Ring out the tone from East to West
That nerved the templar's armed breast.

Ye brazen bells, proclaim His birth,
Good will to man and peace on earth.

And let the joyful message sound
Until it girds the world around!

Oh brazen bells, fill all the air
With solemn summons unto prayer.

Ye bells of iron, give forth the cry
That made the martyrs smile and die.

Ring deep and strong, proclaim His birth
And call the old faith down to earth.

Warn, bells of iron, the listless souls
That drift amid perdition's shoals.

Swing silver bells in belfry tower
This Xmas morn, this holy hour.

Let man no more in darkness grope,
Ring out a peal of love and hope.

Of blessings which this day hath brought,
Of love that passeth human thought!

Oh, silver bells, ring hatred out,
And malice too and poisoning doubt.

Ring out deceit and falsehoods wiles,
Ring in pure hearts and honest smiles!

Ring mammon out and love of self,
Ring in forgetfulness of self!

Ring in that peace which reigns above,
Ring in a world of Christian love.

Wake, Xmas bells, so sweet and mild,
In Bethlehem's manger lies the child;

And from the belfries where ye hide
Peal forth the merry Xmas-tide!

There is but one word more to be said and it is this: A merry, a right merry Christmas to COMFORT's army of readers and to each and all of them many returns of the glad New Year.

HOLIDAY PRESENTS.

We have a large number of elegant presents which we are going to give away to our club getters, besides and in addition to the regular premiums. To the sender of the largest club sent in each day we are to forward a valuable present during the next 30 days. Suits of clothes, sewing machines, albums, watches, dresses, clocks, roller organs and many articles of silverware and other goods are to be given away in this manner. It is an easy matter to obtain 25c. yearly subscribers to COMFORT, and all of our agents are meeting with phenomenal success. You will notice that this month we have added 4 extra pages and will add many new features the coming months of '92, so take advantage of our liberal offers at the start.



MY DEAR COMFORT FRIENDS:

A Merry Christmas to you all! Busy, every one, getting your gifts ready for dear friends and relations? Yes indeed, I know you are. But I want to tell you of the plan a friend of mine is going to carry out this year, and see what you think of it; perhaps it is not too late to persuade some of you to try her way. I am quite converted to it, myself. Some time in the summer, this lady announced to those of her friends with whom she was in the habit of exchanging gifts at Christmas time (by the way, it is this very system of exchange which spoils the spirit of the day), that she should give no presents this year, and wished to receive none, within her own circle. The money which she usually spends in this way, will be devoted to the poor and sick, and those to whom Christmas is only an empty name. This is carrying out the true idea of giving, as taught us by our Master. "But if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye?"—"but do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again." "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Do not think that I would advise any one to ignore the ties of relationship and friendship so dear to all our hearts. This is not necessary. A loving note on Christmas morning will assure our friends of our remembrance; but the heart-burnings, the jealousies, the bitter feelings which our system of exchanging gifts inevitably arouses, will be replaced by the pleasure of giving where we "hope for nothing again," and the touching gratitude of the poor and lonely ones whom we have helped.

"SHUT-IN" SOCIETY MEDICAL BUREAU.

For the purpose of aiding the poor and destitute to procure medical treatment and such other aid as our ability will allow, this society has been organized. Those applying for aid will be required to give a reference from pastor or physician, or some disinterested

person at the "Shut-Ins," since everybody takes a hack at them. I am thankful that I am not one of them; but I do not know how soon I may be called to their low estate. I say low, not because I wish to cast any reflection upon them, but because theirs truly is a deplorable condition. We who have never been "shut in" cannot fully realize how little of this world's pleasures they enjoy. If we would just imagine ourselves exactly in their predicament, I think we might get a better insight of the amount of trouble and anguish they have to endure. How often do we visit the seashore, the mountains, or some other place where we enjoy ourselves in the fullest sense of the word, and never one time think of our poor fellow-mortals who are unable to enjoy any such pleasure. Did you ever go to a "Shut In" and offer to take him or her with you when you were going to some place of pleasure?

Let us notice next the subject of girls marrying men inclined to use intoxicating liquors. I know some of my lady cousins will not be pleased when they read what I have to say, but I cannot and will not tell them anything but the truth. One of the "dear little innocent things"—the girls—has said, "it does not matter if he does drink." Now girls, permit me to give you a word of advice. I am a young man of twenty-two, and therefore ought to have some knowledge of young men. They will make you any promise under the sun to win your hand, and in less time than three months after they lead you to the marriage altar they are grander inebriates than ever. I heard a young man who was habituated to drink say that his girl had asked him to quit drinking for her sake; and therefore he could not take a drink publicly, but that after they were married he would take it as he pleased. Furthermore, to my own personal knowledge he would not speak the least harsh word in her presence and when away would, as the saying is, curse worse than a sailor. Girls, you may not know this

fact, but I do; there are thousands of just such men as I have mentioned; let me ask you earnestly, for your own advantage, to never—never—marry a man on his promise to refrain from drink for your sake. Let me ask you, would you willingly, knowingly marry a man whom you knew to be a drunkard, or a swearer, or a gambler? If you would, I say God pity you and give you better knowledge. For my part, I am a prohibitionist from my soul; and if I were a girl, no man whom I had any right to believe would under any circumstance, take any part in any of the above named or any similar dissipation, should so much as have the pleasure of a single conversation with me. I have known so many beautiful, worthy young ladies ruined by marrying drunkards, gamblers, and other low characters that I must say to the fair sex—and I hope they will heed my words—for Heaven's sake never marry a man with any of the above characteristics. Remember, marriage is for life, not a day or week; whatever you do look before you leap.

One of the most pleasing things to me that has ever appeared in our column, is the determination of the ladies to put a stop to the killing of birds. God bless you, my friends, for taking such a step. Surely if the ladies would think how cruel it is to have them killed, they would never wear another. When I was a boy, I used to hunt a great deal, but since I became a man and took thought of how cruel it was to take the life of poor innocent little creatures, I have refrained from such a course. Now to follow suit with others, I will tell something of myself and surroundings. I am a young man of twenty-two, uneducated, and have to labor hard for what of this world's goods I obtain, but nevertheless enjoy myself well. I have no fears, for I know where there is a will there is a way. I live in the southeastern part of the State. Here farming is carried on somewhat. The pine forest is the great hindrance to agricultural pursuits; but it has been a great advantage to the people. The gathering of naval stores—tar, pitch and turpentine—has been the chief occupation of the eastern part of the State for many years; but the day is not far hence when the lumber mills will have destroyed the pines, and then, as matter of course, the people will seek other employment. The soil here, like other alluvial regions, in some parts very fertile and in others sterile; but taking the State as a whole, it is equal to any in the Union, for almost every plant that can be grown in the republic can be grown here.

JOHN A. TAYLOR, Clarkton, Bladen Co., N. C.

There is some good sensible advice in that letter, girls, and I hope those of you who are encouraging the attentions of fast young men will profit by it. Men generally understand their own sex pretty well, and you may be sure that our Carolina cousin knows what he is talking about.

"I am an Indiana boy. I have to work for my living and consequently I have not much spare time. The column I like best is the chate, I think we can learn so much from them. I think Wm. Te Selle's temperance club is a grand club. Long may it prosper. There's always work for temperance workers, as the field is large and the laborers few. If all the girls would resolve not to let the lips that touch intoxicating liquors and tobacco touch theirs, and keep their resolve, it would possibly be a good thing, as the boys would not like to be left out in the cold, and would try to reform. I never drank any intoxicating liquors or used tobacco, and I have resolved I never should."

"I am an old bachelor, but it gives me great pleasure to read the letters in COMFORT from the young all over this great land of ours. It (COMFORT) does more than that, it has kept me in my room all this blessed Sunday—where from? you ask—the saloons. Just think, little COMFORT has opened my eyes to see what a—I have been. I live in California, the land of fruit, grain, honey and gold. Any where in the U. S. is God's country, but California is the first in the rank of all. All kinds of soil are to be found within its borders, and I might say too, all the different climates to be found in the U. S. Here on the sea coast there is very little change in the summer from the winter months; in the great Redwood saw mills on the bay it is not unusual to see men at work in the summer months with coat and vest on,

when a few miles back in the woods it is pretty warm to work at all. If there are any who are having the California fever I will be placing myself in the interests of the State to encourage all who have some means to come and settle. Yours,
A. L. STUART, Box 289, Eureka, Calif."

Our little COMFORT has been doing a world of good all over the States, why not renew your own subscriptions today and also give it as a Christmas Present to your friends. The 25 cent pieces invested will bring them much happiness.

"Cousin William Thames, I should like to shake hands with you. You are a man, if you are a curiosity. You have reason to be thankful for the mother that was given you. It would be a grand, a glorious thing if all the cousins would take the pledge of total abstinence. Oh, that I could write as with a burning pen, to make a lasting impression, these words: 'Never take the first drink!' This is the surest way to escape a drunkard's grave. Tremble before the first step, for with it the other steps to your first fall are taken, and the succeeding ones to your ruin in time and eternity made easy. And you who have children in your care, do not fail to show them the right way in this matter, lest some day the eyes now so bright look at you bleared and bloodshot, while the lips now so pure trembleingly ask, 'why did you not tell me?'"

ERNESTINE SCHAUER, Juneau, Wis.

We must always give space for those interesting descriptive letters, in which the cousins tell about their homes, and learn of each other's surroundings, thus becoming better acquainted. Some of those will be in order now.

"I wrote you a partial description of our lovely valley of the Grand River some time ago. I will now try and give you a more minute description of this country. (Mesa.) The Grand Valley is situated on the Grand River, extending up and down for a distance of 35 miles; it is from 10 to 25 miles wide; it is within the finest fruit growing belt of the State. Peach Day was celebrated in Grand Junction the 15th of Sept. It was the first day of the kind that was ever observed in this State. Colorado seems to have been the first State to set the example for our watering days for special products. First, Rocky Ford had its Watermelon Day; then Monument, on the divide, established its Potato Bake Day, and now Grand Junction followed with its Peach Day. Gov. Route and his staff graced the occasion; people from every city, town and section were here to enjoy the feast of free peaches. Five tons of peaches were put up in tempting pyramids and handed around in baskets gaily decorated with ribbon to the vast crowd. Yet only six short years ago where G. J. now stands, was reported by a leading newspaper man as a dreary waste of sand and cactus and sage bush. We now have irrigating ditches which bring abundant water for irrigation, and the growth of fruit trees here is wonderful, some bearing fine fruit at 3 years old. The showing which Grand Junction made at the Horticultural Pavilion on Peach Day is but a suggestion of the possibilities of the great Grand River Valley. It demonstrated that in this rich valley can be raised in lavish abundance all the fruits that grow in Southern Cal. and Arizona, except the orange, lemon and olive. We are very fortunate in having a market at home, as it were. With the large city population which Colorado has and always must have, there is no danger that fruit will be left to rot in the orchard. The climate here is adapted to persons with weak lungs, for it is very dry as a general thing, and the winters are not long and are mild, snow never lasting longer than 2 or 3 days at a time. In conclusion I will say that I am not praising the country more than it deserves. Any one that comes West will have to learn a hard lesson, that is, to do without a great many luxuries that they have been accustomed to; but if one is willing to 'brave it out' and not fret over things, by and by they will have a comfortable home surrounded with plenty in a very short time, if they manage right."

Mrs. ALICE KELLAR, Grand Junction, Colo.

"I live in the world-renowned, grand old Catskill, which Nature has endowed with so much beauty, only a few miles from the Overlook Mountain House, where you can get the finest view there is of the low lands and the majestic Hudson. Further on is Twilight Park. In the distance are the picturesque Kauterskill Falls, with the Laurel House in the background. The grand old mountains tower heavenward, while below is an awful gulf and Haines Falls. In looking from this rustic bridge down into this impressive chasm, one is filled with awe and solemnity at the depth and grandeur of the scene. Romantic cottages have been erected for the comfort of visitors, also some simple, rustic log cabins (which remind us of the pioneer days); stepping inside we find old fireplaces, small stained windows, plain simple furniture and bare floors, and one is loth to leave, for everything is so quaint and ancient looking. But we must step outside again and feast on the wild scenes about us; the dense forest, the rocks in their massive forms and perchance a squirrel or woodchuck, with the merry songsters making the air melodious with their warbles. In moving on we behold a gap in the mountains, giving us a glimpse into another world, (as it seems) of a wide range of country, mountains in the distance, hills and valleys, cottages and finer residences, rivers and streams flowing on into that great unbounded ocean. Going on we come to the Hote Kauterskill, the largest and most modern mountain house in the world, also the Catskill House with its lakes and own natural beauty. Perhaps I am tiring you with my mountain descriptions; but if any of you come this way, just stop and see some of the beauties I am boasting of, and I know you will enjoy it. I am very fond of reading and hearing of the beauties of Nature and every State has its own, so I wish some cousin from every State in this grand republic would write me an interesting, instructive letter about their own State, its particular beauties, etc. I have visited several beautiful spots on this broad footstool, and if fortune leaves me a legacy, I shall see much more of the handiwork of Nature, which proclaims in a thousand ways the Creator's greatness. Please write."

CARRIE A. MILLER, Bearsville, Ulster Co., N. Y.

"I live away up here among the beautiful mountains of North Carolina. The highest mountains east of the Mississippi are situated in this State. This is one of the leading States in the production of tobacco, flax, hemp and all kinds of grain. The vine, fig and peach, with other orchard fruits, are produced, as well as melons, peanuts and sweet potatoes. In the southern sections cotton is extensively cultivated. And this country is progressing very much in the education of her people. Would some of the cousins and Auntie, too, appropriate a few words about the Indians? I live inside of the Indian boundary, and surrounded by a band of Cherokees. Their customs and manners are somewhat amusing. The squaws are seen trudging along with very heavy bundles tied on their backs, consisting of the young Indian, produce, etc., while the men follow along behind with blow gun and arrows, killing birds, or throwing stones at some hornet's nest they may chance to see on the roadside, from two to four half-starved dogs at their feet complete the scene. The Government is endeavoring to educate the Indians here, but finds it hard to turn them from their old ways. Respectfully,

ROBT. CHILDERS, Birdtown, N. C."

"So many are describing their homeland, I thought I too would tell you of our lovely Western country. We live in Southern Wisconsin, in the county of Green, and in one of the southern townships of the county. The State line separating Wis. and Ill. is but 2 1/2 miles south of us. The country is pleasantly diversified by strips of heavy timber (or it was heavy ere the woodman's ax made sad havoc there) and rolling prairie. Monroe is our county seat, and it is said to be situated on the highest ground between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi river, or 1,083 feet above sea level. The heart of the city is occupied by

the Public Square, in the center of which our new \$35,000 court house is being built. The streets are lighted by electricity. The water supply is found in two large wells, which are dug down into the rock formation called St. Peter's sandstone, (which our State geologist says is the best water supplying rock in the State.) The water is forced (by steam) to the top of a high stand-pipe in Lincoln Park and from there distributed in mains under ground to all parts of the city. The Milwaukee & St. Paul R. R. and the Ill. Central both have nice depots and abundant freight accommodations within the city limits. Green Co. is composed of 16 townships, each 36 miles square. Thousands of cows are milked in this county and the milk carried every morning and evening to the numerous cheese factories, and to the condensed milk factory at Monroe. The county is famous for its cheese of various kinds, American Swiss, Brick and the highly perfumed Limburger. Through the eastern part of our county the Sugar River flows, and through the southwestern part the Pecatonica. These rivers abound in shells, 'pearl shell,' indeed, and in truth, it is but two years since it became known that the shells in these rivers held many fortunes in their embrace. I will quote a few lines from one of our last week's papers, (Albany is in our county.) 'Editor Thorp of the Albany, Wis. Journal says the pearl hunting interest of that point is by no means dead yet. A man named Murry found five gems in one day recently, and refused \$600 for them. Mr. Thorp says it is estimated that not less than \$175,000 has been paid to Albany people for pearls during the past two years. One gem sold for \$7,000 and is now in Paris, where it is reputed to be the finest in the world.' Box 93, Monroe, Wis."

"I like to give a helping hand to those in need, but I quite agree with Lone Star, there are very few of us who have not one dark cloud in all our lives, but it should not make others unhappy. We have sympathy for you all, my dear afflicted friends, but look to the bright side. I live in the anthracite coal regions and have been down the mines often. You can walk down some, but more often you go down on a cage or car. When you are once down, you cannot see your hand before you, unless you have a mining lamp or a lantern, and then only a short distance. It is a dark dismal place; people in large cities do not know what hardships the poor miners have to dig, and the breaker boys to pick the slate out of the coal they use with comfort. With kind regards to all my cousins, I am respectfully,
Mrs. GEO. BECK,
522 W. Centre St., Mahanoy City, Penn."

Thank you for the samples you so kindly sent; they were very pretty.

"Southern Louisiana is a vast field of waving cane. The tall smoke-stacks of 1,200 factories rise above the clustered roofs of as many plantations. Villages and towns have everywhere arisen under the stimulus of the industry, and the country appears to be teeming with wealth. The planters live in beautiful villas or roomy old Creole residences, rising amid parks and avenues of magnificent live-oaks hung with flowing moss, or surrounded by dark green groves of orange or lemon. They dispense a hospitality which has become proverbial in both continents. They are generally characterized by extravagance in their manner of living. In winter they resort to the expensive hotels of New Orleans, and devote themselves to the social and carnival festivities of the fashionable capital of their section. In summer there is a great exodus to Northern springs and watering-places, or across the Atlantic on European tours. H



OLD LADY:
GOOD GRACIOUS SAKES ALIVE BOYS!
WHAT'S HAPPENED!

seems as if a landed aristocracy is arising in this section, to rival the baronial magnificence of medieval times. I hope we will soon hear from our cousin Mr. De Vere. I will ask an Indian boy to correspond with me. 'Votre neveu Louisianais.'

R. H. FLAISANCE, Convent P. O., St. James, La."

The cousins have been demanding bright, cheery letters, and here I find one which just answers to that description.

"May I poke my nose in here? Do you care for a new acquaintance? 'Who am I?' I'll produce my references in a minute, if they are not satisfactory, give me the cold shoulder, and I'll step quietly out again. Though for many years a resident of Connecticut, I was born in the smoky old manufacturing town of Birmingham, England. The house in Ingby St. where these eyes first saw daylight (or I think it was lamplight) has at present no marble slab to my precious memory. This cold world takes creatures like me for granted. But revenge may come—who knows—the very bricks of that forgotten house may yet fetch their weight in gold. In fact I advise any one contemplating a European trip, to visit that Ingby St. house at once and secure a few bricks while they are cheap, 't would be a good business investment. But ere you start, let me be candid with you. I am not sure I was born there at all. That is, I don't remember it. It is one of the few things I have to take for granted. One of the first things I do remember was in another house, opposite to Gillett's steel pen factory. You all know Gillett's steel pens, so now you half know me, don't you, for I lived opposite in a little brick house up an entry. Gentle readers, I am sorry to make the confession, but the first picture my memory furnishes in the camera-like vision of my life, is of a naughty little girl outside a green door, kicking and crying with all her might. I'm afraid of that cold shoulder of yours now, but truth must be told in this case."

"My parents, through no fault of theirs, were very poor. I've heard of such a thing as the tablecloth being shaken out at the back door at dinner time to give to the neighbors an appearance as if we had dined, when our empty stomachs denied the fact. I have heard how the same cloth was spread in despair when there was nothing to put upon it, and how the prayer went up, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and how surprised everybody was when there was a rap at the door, and a person came to pay an old debt of two shillings, which Godsend furnished our much needed meal. I say, how surprised we all were, people usually are, strange to say, when their prayers are answered."

"Such poverty is very pitiable, yet do not think I was unhappy. Oh no, I was a child. I had no care. A dyspeptic king might envy my enjoyment while I sat on the doorstep eating a thick slice of bread and lard. Occasionally I longed for toys from Santa Claus; while he never forgot us, we were six all told, rarely brought anything more costly than a handful of nuts and candy. How I longed for a doll carriage! 'Well,' father said one day, 'I'll tell you how you can get a doll carriage; you go without eating for a week, and I'll buy you one.' 'I'll do it,' I said at once;



HERE SHE COMES.

party. "Shut-In" members annual fee, 25c.; associate, 50c. President, Anna Reed, P. O. Box 262, Covington, Indiana; vice-president, Frank Short, Nelson, Mich.; secretary and treasurer, Grace M. Pratt, Mukwonago, Wisc.; advisory and consulting physician, W. E. Anthony, M.D., 64 John St., Providence, R. I. All fees and donations should be sent to Miss Pratt. Now dear cousins, let us all try to make this society an aid and blessing to the poor and afflicted ones.

ONLY.

Only a little wayside flower
Blooming, will please the traveler's eye.
Only a gentle summer shower
Causes the brook to ripple by.
Only a kind word, sweetly spoken,
Brings a ray of hope to the heart.
Only a habit, quickly broken,
Helps us from error soon to part.
Only a whisper of deep contrition
Raised to our Father's loving heart.
Only a thought, will, as a petition,
Cast from conscience the stinging dart.
Only a trust in our loving Saviour
Helps us to bear the bluffs of life.
Only a step across death's river,
We are free from earthly strife.

L. E. BUFFINGTON.

I am going to let the cousins have a little talk together on the temperance question this month, as a great many letters have been received displaying an interest in that subject. All remember our Comfort Temperance Club. (President, Wm. Te Selle, Box 330, Sheboygan Falls, Wisc.)

"Some of the cousins, I see, write about novel reading, some about the temperance question, etc. Now, I shall try to say my say about the latter, for I think that drunkenness, or the whiskey habit, is the greatest curse that ever visited this earth; indeed, it is far worse than the ten plagues of Egypt, or anything I can call to mind. O why don't all Christian people unite, and by the help of their leader, Jesus Christ, overthrow this greatest foe to civilization. this curse of our age, the demon of drink? O cousins and all good people, it lies with you, and you, to unite, and with one mighty effort, forever overthrow Satan's power on earth. Let us appeal to our friends and to every person to unite with us, uproot and tear down saloons, and stop this great curse. Just think of the amount of money that is annually spent for intoxicating drinks. As has been said, 'Civilization means a small amount of gospel and an overwhelming amount of whiskey.' Let us reverse this and make it read, 'a small amount of whiskey and an overwhelming amount of gospel.' Let us never cease in our trying till the dark clouds disappear which envelope us; and the blessed religion of the Lamb of God diffuses its sweet influence around us in dazzling splendor. Your nephew,
H. P. BELL, Big Bend, W. Va."

It is enough to do one's heart good to hear such earnest words from the young men on this important question. I hope many more are willing to take this stand.

"There are so many things about which to talk that I do not know just where to begin; but let us take a



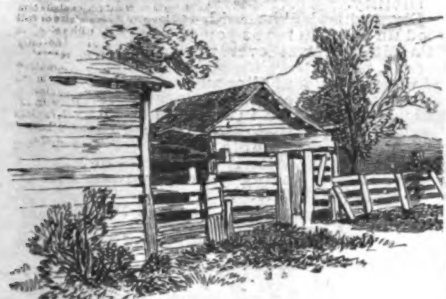
Genius Versus Hardwork.

We this month present this short sketch on "Genius Versus Hardwork," as it makes a good preface to some very interesting illustrated articles on the millionaires of N. Y. and other cities that we are now having written up to appear exclusively in COMFORT. Sketches in the career of Russell Sage, Jay Gould, the Vanderbilts, Astors, Rockfellers, Morgans, and other prominent wealthy men are always interesting and our articles will be made especially attractive and helpful as guides to the young who have their mark to make in the world.

Let no young man be cast down because in the fullness of his own observation he has reached the conclusion that he is an ordinary man, and that he is without genius. Though "The Century's" admirable dictionary defines genius as the possession of phenomenal intellectual capacity, we have the authority of Sydney Smith, W. D. Howells, Chas. Dickens, and Abraham Lincoln that genius is but another name for the results of patient and incessant labor. That there are instances to the contrary is not to be doubted, but generally speaking, the life of all truly great men has been the life of intense and incessant labor. Edmund Burke was in early life a struggling lawyer, and his first work of any importance "On the Sublime and Beautiful" is a treatise of but little importance, and was characterized by Macaulay as being as dry as a parliamentary report. Yet Mr. Burke was the most laborious and indefatigable of human beings, and the time came when the resources of his immense intellectual powers were to be displayed. The great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had echoed to the inaugurations of thirty kings; the hall which had seen the just sentence of Bacon, and where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with that placid courage which has half redeemed his fame, became the scene of his greatest triumph, when he was intrusted with the impeachment of Warren Hastings.

"Therefore," said he, "hath it with all confidence been ordered by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors. I impeach him in the name of the Commonwealth of Parliament whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation whose ancient honor he has sullied, and I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden underfoot, and whose country he has turned into a desert, and in the name of human nature itself in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and offender of all."

This sounds like genius, yet the results of long course of study and profound thinking are plainly discernible. Hard work is at the bottom of it.



LINCOLN'S EARLY HOME.

Abraham Lincoln studied while he split rails. Grant learned the hard work necessary to success in a country tanner. Daniel Webster knew the heights possible to the young man of application. Godfrey William Liebritz, the great German mathematician and philosopher, was never out of his study, and Blaise Pascal, the eminent French writer on geometry, killed himself by overwork. John Milton was at his "Paradise Lost" with the same regularity that a business man pursues his vocation, and Raphael fell a victim to his incessant toil at the early age of thirty-seven.

Thus it is that when the fruit of labor suddenly bursts forth in all its dazzling splendor, that the unthinking cry out, "Another phenomenon on," "A wonderful genius!" Born to make his mark, etc. The long weary years of patient toil are lost sight of—the man has sprung into being without the formality of babyhood. He has entered the arena an acknowledged champion!

No one talks in that way except the unthinking. Position is not easily won, nor is it easily held. There is more room at the top, but the merry war is there just the same. The successful competitor instead of trusting to his own single mind has ransacked the accumulated treasures of the ages, and every intellectual gift of nature however insignificant is capable of the same development as a reward of the same effort.

It might be a comfort to many a young man to know that there is no height to which he may not aspire; that there is no position which he may not occupy, and the bigger the prize the bigger the price. And to quote a homely but terse epigram from Mr. George Eastman, inventor of Kodak cameras, who is himself an illustration of what hard work can do, we remark in closing, "More men die from bumming than from hard work."

VARICOCELE! I was QUICKLY CURED! Willard C. Howard, Marshall, Mich.

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If it takes you five minutes to answer this advertisement, you will be earning \$25 a minute.



1000 WORLD'S FAIR EXCURSION TICKETS!

Good for the ROUND-TRIP from any Railroad Station in the United States within 1000 miles of Chicago, in any direction, on any road, And the following 1000 valuable Real Estate Properties will be GIVEN AWAY, absolutely free.

LIST OF FREE PROPERTIES:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 175 | 5-acre Tracts of Olive Nut, and Grape Land in FRESNO COUNTY CALIFORNIA in the San Joaquin Valley. |
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This extraordinary announcement means exactly what it says. It is based upon excellent business reasons that will hereafter appear. There is no trick, no juggling of words, no misunderstanding. It means that every patron of THE MUTUAL HOME SYNDICATE, to the number of 1000, will be PRESENTED with one of the above valuable real estate properties and a round-trip World's Fair Railroad Excursion Ticket, good from any railroad station in the United States within ONE THOUSAND MILES of Chicago, in any direction, on any railroad. It means exactly that—nothing less, nothing more.

SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO EITHER OUR COLUMBUS OR CINCINNATI OFFICE: **MUTUAL HOME SYNDICATE,** (Board of Trade Annex, Columbus, Ohio.) (Lincoln Inn-Court, Cincinnati, Ohio.)

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METHOD OF ALLOTMENT.

The foregoing 1000 Free Properties and 1000 World's Fair Excursion Tickets will be GIVEN AWAY, with absolute impartiality and fairness, to the first 1000 applicants who comply with the simple business conditions connected with this unparalleled offer. The method of distribution or allotment is as follows—NOTE ITS FAIRNESS:

We have had produced from photographs and original drawings and official plans a Panoramic Painting of the Columbia World's Fair as it will appear when opened in May of 1893. As reproduced in colored oil printings it forms a beautiful and instructive view, covering more than 600 acres, including the principal Government, Manufacturing, Electrical, Mining, Agricultural, Machinery and other magnificent Buildings, Artificial Lakes and Islands, Drives, Harbors, Marine View, etc. In order to divide at least a portion of the expense of advertising among those who will receive its benefits, a remittance of 50c. for this picture is required from each applicant. Send your FULL NAME and address with a 50c. postal note, money or express order or by registered letter.

CUT OUT the "List of Free Properties" in the adjoining column; indicate your choice of property by marking a cross (X) in the space at the left of the property you prefer. By return mail you will receive the picture and a World's Fair Excursion and Warranty Deed Bond, securing one of the Free Properties and a World's Fair Railroad Excursion Ticket, good for the round-trip from your own home to Chicago and return.

IMPORTANT Whatever free property is thus allotted, whether it be a 5-acre Olive, Nut, or Fruit Farm or a Business Lot at either of the cities designated, the ADJOINING five acres or lot will be reserved for the applicant for two years with the privilege of purchase in connection with the free property on small installment payments, thus enabling the benefits of this offer to be largely increased.

EXCURSION PARTIES When two or more members of a family, or friends, desire to secure property and visit the World's Fair together, Excursion Parties of not to exceed TEN may be formed, and application be made by one of their number for the party. The full name of each member must be given, choice of property designated, and 50c. for the World's Fair picture be remitted for each name. The privilege is reserved of returning money and canceling the Free Ticket and Warranty Deed bond in any case when an application is received after all the properties have been allotted, or when the adjoining property cannot be reserved for an applicant.

Apply TO-DAY.

OUR WORLD'S FAIR PICTURE IS A GEM.

OLIVE'S LOVERS.

Marry him? Well, I suppose I shall have to, or else lose all the money; and what is love without money, Jack? How I wish something would happen, but I have very little hope left."

She stops short, as if she has said all there is to be said, and pours herself another cup of tea.

"You speak as if it were a pleasure—the having to marry him I mean," says the young man on the opposite side the small table.

"Why deal so mysteriously in pronouns, Jack, dear? And why not call Mr. Carroll by his name?"

"Simply because I detest his name, himself, and everything belonging to him," Jack Dering says savagely.

"Then you hate me, too, for I in a measure belong to him."

"That you do not, and never shall, if I can prevent it. Olive, is there no way out of it?"

"I'm afraid not, Jack, and after all, money is a power."

"Quite true, but what is money, what is anything, without love?"

"Aunt Janet says that when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window," Olive says pensively.

"But, Olive, child, I am not the pauper you think me. I have three hundred a year."

"And I, if I marry Duke Carroll, will have an income of thirty thousand a year."

"I wish you were not so mercenary, Olive," he says, reproachfully. "A true, loving heart is worth more to a woman than all the wealth of the world, and so you will find when it is too late."

"Oh, Jack, how can you think so badly of me? You know that I love you better than any one in the wide world; but I fear that Aunt Janet will never give her consent to our marriage. Are you going already, Jack?"

"It is good-bye for a little time, my dear Olive. I am off to town by the 4.30 express."

Another ten minutes is consumed in good-byes, and then Jack is gone. When his footsteps die away the love light fades quickly from the girl's eyes.

"It is a most cruel will," she says aloud. "Why should Uncle Timothy condemn me to marry a man whom I have never seen, in order to inherit his wretched money? As for Duke Carroll, I am fully prepared to hate him."

"A most unwise conclusion," says a quiet voice from the doorway, where Miss Merton stands.

"Oh, Auntie, did you hear me? Well, it's the truth at any rate."

"Where is your schoolboy lover?" Miss Janet inquires. "I see you have been feeding him on bread and butter and tea, a most proper diet for boys of his age."

"Poor Jack," Olive says mournfully.

"Poor Jack, indeed!" cries Miss Janet. "He looked anything but deserving of pity when I saw him just now, with his hat perched on one side his head, and whistling some absurd tune."

"You are hard upon Jack, Auntie; he looks upon the bright side of things."

"There is no bright side in his case. He has no right to drag you down into a life of poverty; you who have been reared so tenderly."

"But, Auntie, love is more than everything else together."

"Silly child! ease and comfort are more to be sought after—so you will think when it is too late. Years of toil and privation are not calculated to heighten any woman's charms, and so your husband would tell you, after you had sacrificed the best years of your life for his comfort."

"That is so unlike Jack, he would never speak so to any woman, least of all to the woman he loved."

"Your faith is beautiful, my dear. May you keep it, is all I have to say," and with a snort like a war-horse Miss Janet leaves the room, with her colors flying in triumph.

During the sad days that follow, Jack's strange silence puzzles the girl sorely. He had promised so faithfully to write, yet a month goes by, and she receives no tidings of her absent lover.

Ah, if she only knew the fate of those tender, loving letters that Jack Dering pens daily for a time, and that somehow find their way unopened into Miss Merton's kitchen fire when Olive happens to be out sketching in the pretty wood, or away with Prince on her morning ramble.

"It is only what I expected, child," she says day after day. "There is nothing in the world so unstable as a young man's fancy. No doubt Jack Dering has forgotten your very existence by this time."

Olive will not trust herself to reply, but runs from the house out into the garden, her golden curls all dishevelled, and straight into the arms of a remarkably handsome young man who is coming leisurely up the garden path.

"I beg your pardon," Olive cries, flushing hotly.

"It is yours," he returns graciously. "You are Miss Merton's niece?" he goes on.

"I am Olive Trenwith and Miss Merton is my aunt."

"Allow me to introduce myself. I am Marmaduke Carroll."

In an instant Olive's smile freezes.

"Will you walk in, sir?" she asks coldly. "No doubt Auntie will be delighted to see you," and with a curt bow of dismissal, she leaves him standing hat in hand in the middle of the garden path, her usually charming manners forgotten.

With a low whistle of surprise Duke Carroll watches the slender figure out of sight, and then pursues his way indoors, where he meets with a most delightful welcome from Miss Merton. She is eloquent in her praise of the stranger that evening when she and Olive are alone.

Each day brings Mr. Carroll to the cottage, and each day the girl looks in vain for a letter. No letter! the words fall like the voice of doom on her throbbing heart. No letter! she hears it in feverish dreams and flies continually from its hissing.

Only those who have known what it is to stake their hopes on a sheet of letter paper, who have wakened at dawn counting the hours that must go by till the mail is due, working diligently to murder time till that hour rolls round to send a messenger in hot haste, to listen for the sound of returning footsteps, to meet him at the door with outstretched hands, and receive—no letter! only those who have writhed on this rack know the misery of such days. These are the trials that plough wrinkles in smooth girlish brows, that harden the outline of soft rosy lips, that sicken the weary soul and teach women deception.

Olive knew that both her aunt and Duke Carroll watched her closely, and behind the mask of gay, rapid words and ringing, mirthless laughter, she tried to hide her suffering.

One day she obtains a late copy of the "Times," which Duke brings to them occasionally. Instinctively she glances at the list headed "Marriages," and then, oh! heaven help her, her very heart seems to cease its pulsation. She stands motionless a moment, but the walls of the room spin around like maple leaves in an autumn gale.

"Can it be true? Was Aunt Janet right after all, and is there no truth, no love in the world?"

Coming into the room sometime later Miss Merton finds her niece prone upon the floor, the paper grasped tightly in her death-cold hand. When she has restored the girl to con-

sciousness she grasps the "Times" and reads eagerly, almost joyfully, Olive thinks, the following paragraph:

MARRIED.

On Nov. 19th at St. John's Episcopal Church, John M. Dering and Irene Clifton, all of Boston. The happy couple will leave the city immediately on an extended tour of Europe.

That same evening Duke Carroll strolls into the small drawing-room, unannounced, where Olive is sitting all alone in the firelight, playing softly on the old worn-out piano that sounds an unpleasant jingle in the treble.

"Will you sing me just one song, Olive?" he says pleadingly.

One by one she turns over her songs, then selects one, and begins to sing in her rich, tender contralto, "Tears, idle tears." As she rises from the piano Duke clasps her hands in his, and says eagerly:

"Olive, shall I tell you what lies next my heart? I came here to-night to ask you to be my wife, have you no word for me, Olive?"

She turns from him and says calmly:

"I do not love you, Duke, and if I marry you, it will be for wealth and position."

"So be it," he says, almost solemnly. "Such love as mine must create a return some time. I will leave you now, Olive, and come again in the morning to talk the matter over with Miss Merton. Good-night, my darling."

Olive gives him an unwilling hand, and in another moment he is gone.

Miss Merton loses no time in having the approaching marriage duly chronicled in the city papers and it is here that Jack Dering first sees it, as he sits alone in his bachelor apartments in town, pondering for the hundredth time over Olive's strange conduct, in not replying to his letters.

"Women are all alike the world over," he says scornfully, flinging the paper to one side.

"Well, about the best thing I can do, will be to accept Uncle John's offer, and the position he offers me, as private secretary. I will go abroad with a bridal party after all, and try to forget there is such a thing as love in the world!"

Time rolls on, summer is casting down her crown of flowers, the reapers are busy in the fields, and to-morrow is Olive's wedding day. Above stairs the snowy silk, the lace veil, the fragrant orange blossoms, are all in readiness. Duke, who has gone to the city, is expected home by the evening train, but as the hours go by and he comes not, Miss Janet frets and fumes herself almost into a fever of impatience.

"Something awful must have happened, Olive," she says for the twentieth time.

Something awful has happened. Duke Carroll, lost in blissful dreams of the future, that fancy paints in such glowing colors, seated in a luxuriously furnished compartment of the home-bound train, is rudely awakened by a succession of shrill sounds, which indicate that the conductor is either frightened or frantic. The conductor rushes bareheaded through the car, people spring to their feet, then a shock, as if the day of doom has dawned, a crash, and all is chaos!

Viewed by the aid of lanterns and the lurid, flickering light of torches, the scene of disaster presents a ghastly debris of dead and dying, of crushed cars and wounded men and women, who writhe and groan among the shattered timbers from which they find it impossible to extricate themselves. The cries of those who recognize relatives in the mutilated corpses who are dragged out from the wreck, increase the horrors of the occasion.

Duke Carroll lies between two timbers, one of which has fallen across his feet and crushed them. Another has fallen on his head, while one arm is pinioned to his side. His lips are pinched and purple, the white lids lie rigid over the laughing blue eyes, his hands are stiff and icy. He is quite dead when they find him, some hours later, when a group of men with axes in their hands bend down and look into his face. Dead—and to-morrow his wedding day!

They bring him home and lay him to rest in the old family vault, the burial place of the Carrolls.

Olive wears mourning for the man who so nearly became her husband, though in her heart she is not sorry to be free and mistress of thirty thousand a year.

A year passes quietly away, with its summer flowers, autumn beauty, and winter snow. Olive is a great heiress now, and accompanied by Aunt Janet, has improved the time in travel.

Just now they are stopping at a well known hotel near Chicago, for Miss Merton has declared it absolutely necessary to her niece's health to obtain at least a few weeks' rest after the round of summer gayeties.

"Remember, Olive," she says, raising a warning finger, "it is to be rest, absolutely."

"I do hope it will not be too dull," sighs Olive. "If only a few nice people whom we know could be with us, Auntie."

Things were dull enough in truth at the country hotel, until Saturday came, bringing with it a crowd of men from the city.

Miss Merton and Olive go down to dinner together that night, and are both considerably shocked to find Jack Dering standing in the hall giving directions concerning his luggage.

It is too late to retreat, and there is nothing for it but a mutual recognition, a light hand clasp, a smile, a bow, and it is all over. All over, while Olive tells herself that in spite of everything, she loves this handsome Jack as she never loved him in the past.

"We must leave this place to-morrow, Auntie," she whispers pleadingly. "You will not mind?"

"Certainly, my dearest," Aunt Janet says kindly.

Perhaps she feels at times some slight remorse at her share in the girl's unhappy past, for she has been doubly kind and thoughtful since Marmaduke Carroll's tragic death and collapse of her long cherished scheme of seeing Olive his wife.

It is the 27th of October, dinner is at an end, and tired of strolling in the grounds and gardens so softly perfumed by the night flowers, most of the party pass into the lighted parlors, while Jack Dering and several other gentlemen linger outside on the balcony to finish their cigars.

"Miss Trenwith sing something for us to-night," Mrs. Beauchamp says coaxingly. "Anything you like, only sing."

"Do not ask me," Olive objects languidly. "It is so long since I have sung that I scarcely know any song correctly."

"Break down if you will, only sing for us," says someone else.

"Do, Miss Trenwith," says Jack.

He has come in through the open window, and something in his tone strikes Miss Janet as being odd. He is looking eagerly, fixedly at Olive. Will she refuse this unexpected request of his? Olive raises to his a face smiling, but pale.

"Well, yes, I will sing you something," she says, and strikes a few lingering chords. Then she begins.

"I linger round the very spot
Where years ago we met,
And wonder when you quite forgot,
Or if you quite forgot,
And tender yearnings rise anew
For love that used to be."

If you could know that I was true,
And I that you were free.

Love once again, meet me once again.
Old love is waking, shall it wake in vain?"

As she came to the last line a wild sadness mingles with her tone. When she has finished they are all silent. The moonlight, streaming across the carpet, rebukes the soft radiance of the lamps. Pushing aside the curtains with one hand, Jack says in a low, determined tone: "Miss Trenwith, will you come and see how the gardens look by moonlight?"

"Yes, if you wish it," she says, letting the words fall from her lips with singular sweetness.

"I am so glad," exclaims Miss Janet plaintively, when they are out of hearing. "Now I hope they will marry each other, and bring their little comedy to a close."

For long since, without Miss Janet's aid, had the girl discovered her terrible mistake in supposing that it was her Jack who had married. But still there were many things to be explained away during that long happy hour in the chill October moonshine. Among others, the missing letters. At last, Jack manages to hint his suspicions to Olive, and though it causes her gentle heart another pang to accept Aunt Janet's guilt as a hard fact, it is too plain to mistake. She yields to his opinion in everything, just as in the old day, for who could resist Jack's eyes, or Jack's outstretched arms? Olive never pretended to, so that is why her golden head found such a speedy resting place upon his broad shoulder.

"This past year has been a weary one to me, Jack," she whispers presently.

"But it is over now, Olive, darling. Let us look forward and not backward. Please God there are many years of happiness in store for us yet. Truly, there is no joy so complete as that which succeeds sorrow—no happiness so sweet as that which follows upon misery."

And what do you suppose Aunt Janet gave her niece and nephew for a bridal present? quite out of keeping, you will say, with the grand display of diamonds, gold and silver and crystal that dazzled the eyes of those fortunate enough to be invited, a year's subscription to COMFORT!

"For," as she remarked to her dear five hundred friends, "as I have always said, though Olive would never believe me, there is nothing so desirable as comfort in this world of ours. I trust the dear child may be happy after all."

And so she was.

"All was ended now, the hope, the fear, and the sorrow.

All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing.

All the dull deep pain—
And the constant anguish of patience!

GEORGE LEE BRUCE.

Wild Rose; or, Teaching a Backs-

wood's School.

A good many years ago when I was a much younger man than I am now and beginning to struggle with the world, I found myself stranded in the city of Detroit, out of work and money.

Although possessing a good education and various accomplishments, I, like many another such, could obtain employment no better than the veriest hod-carrier, and found my education of little use to me. Everywhere I applied for work the answer was the same: no opening, apply again, until I was so tired and dispirited I did not know where to go or what to do. Things were in this discouraging condition when one day I read in a newspaper the following advertisement:

"WANTED.—The trustees of the Scraggleville Public School would like a teacher for the school. Must be well educated and able to manage scholars. Apply to trustees, School-house, Scraggleville."

I learned from the landlord of the house where I was stopping that Scraggleville was about twenty miles from Detroit, and further than this my informant did not know, his knowledge of the place being limited.

I determined to apply for the position, although I had no knowledge of its worth, or the salary was not stated in the advertisement. However, wages were not of much consequence with me as I would be satisfied with almost nothing, so eager was I to get work.

So next morning I settled up a small score I owed the landlord and set out on my journey to Scraggleville. I did not like teaching school had I any choice in the matter, but one is compelled to do a great many disagreeable things when necessity compels, and so I was willing to try it, provided I was lucky enough to secure the job.

It was a good journey to Scraggleville and I was footsore enough before I had traversed half the distance. Fortunately I got a lift on the cart of a friendly rustic who was also bound for the place, and rode the remainder of the way.

I stated my errand to the friendly rustic and secured board at his house. He told me that there were several other applicants, and that the trustees who were farmers, and worked hard during the day, would hold a meeting that night in the school-house for the purpose of examining the applicants.

Scraggleville, as I saw before I was in it many hours, was a typical backwoods town, built of log huts and cabins, the population of which seemed rude and ignorant to a degree. But though now in a most primitive state the place gave promise of a great future, and I may incidentally mention here that this promise was fulfilled and Scraggleville is to-day one of the liveliest towns in Michigan.

Well, when evening came the applicants were examined by the trustees—three hard-featured, illiterate old farmers, who themselves looked as if they could hardly read or write. There were two other candidates besides myself—a man and a woman—a sour-faced female, who looked a typical country "schoolma'am." To give them their due they were good scholars and well versed in the three R's, and the "trustees" were not impressed by their learning as I saw. But I possessed an accomplishment which they did not—that of drawing. I was a fairly good artist and when I drew some pictures for the committee on the blackboard that settled the matter—and in my favor. I began my duties at once and when I got accustomed to it rather liked the work. It amused me and the pay was satisfactory—twenty-five dollars a month and board, which I got by staying in turns at the different farm-houses in the village.

The Scraggleville school-house was not the imposing structure we see nowadays; it was built of logs, rudely put together, but strong and serviceable. The interior was rudely furnished and contained a battered desk and high-stool situated on a platform for the teacher, and a triple row of hardwood benches and desks for the pupils. A few cheap prints covered the walls and a water-pail, stool and set of time-worn text-books completed the furniture of the school.

The scholars were a rough set like their elders, boys and girls, and as hard to govern as a lot of donkeys. Some of them were very mischievous and one especially who seemed a ring-leader. This was a girl of fifteen, a very handsome rosy cheeked lass named Rose Maybell, the daughter of one of Scraggleville's leading citizens.

She was a veritable madcap—a hoyden—and gave me more trouble than any two boys in the school. Yet she was a bright pupil when she would learn. There were a good many rough and turbulent lads among the pupils of the Scraggleville public school, but I soon reduced these to obedience. The summary measures I took with these, however, I could not take with my hoydenish pupil, Wild Rose Maybell, as she was called on account of her madcap disposition. One cannot thrash a girl very well, and so Wild Rose rather had the advantage of me. But matters soon reached a point where I was compelled to take the girl in hand and talk to her like a "Dutch Uncle." Her conduct became outrageous, and indeed encouraged by her companions and my hitherto lenient treatment of her, she set my authority at defiance. I called her up to the desk one morning and stated matters to her plainly. I showed her how she was wasting the golden hours of youth in senseless idling and mischief and that she ought to be more industrious. But, of course, my fatherly advice fell on deaf ears, and when I threatened her with corporal punishment she laughed defiantly.

"You wouldn't dare lick me," she said, her eyes sparkling with anger. "My pa 'ud lick you to death if you teched me. So there."

And the little spitfire looked so handsome as she faced me in defiance that I felt more like throwing my arms around her and kissing her than beating her.

But I restrained myself and told her to bear what I had said in mind. Although Wild Rose was a favorite of mine I meant what I had said and was determined to punish her if she did not mend her ways. But she did not do so, and, after she had been unusually mischievous I called her up one day and administered to her a good rattanning.

She was very much chagrined and vowed that she would tell her "pa," and she must have done so, for next morning before school opened I was waited upon by a strapping backwoodsman—a rough, grizzled, pioneer in hickory shirt and cowhide boots, who without further ceremony introduced himself as Sam Maybell, father of my pupil, Wild Rose, and wanted to know what I meant by beating his daughter. I explained to him that what I had done had been only done in my position as schoolmaster, and for the girl's good, and that I had a perfect right to do it. But the bull-headed fellow would listen to no explanation at all, and at once went in "to clean me out" as he expressed it. He aimed a blow at me which I parried and soon we were hotly engaged, for my blood was up at the fellow's conduct, and I was determined to give him a good thrashing.

I was a fairly good boxer and wrestler and I soon discovered that my opponent possessed none of these athletic accomplishments, relying wholly on brute strength to defeat me.

Around the school-room we wrestled and fought, overturning the desk in our struggle. Blows were freely exchanged. Finally we clinched and tripping him up, we fell to the floor with a crash that shook the schoolhouse. I regained my feet immediately but my antagonist did not. He lay motionless where he had fallen, his face colorless, and a tiny stream trickling from his head. I grew horror-stricken. Was he killed? I dashed water over his face and soon he revived. He was very weak and did not offer to resume the fight. From his talk I saw that he imagined that I had stunned him with a blow, but I discovered that in falling he had struck the back of his head on the edge of the platform, which had caused his insensibility.

"Shake hands," he said, faintly. "You're a good un to down me as you did. First time old Sam Maybell was ever whopped. Let us be friends, pard."

I was willing and after an exchange of fraternal courtesies he went home, and afterward I had no firmer friend in Scraggleville than Sam Maybell. From that day his unruly daughter gave me no more trouble, nor any of the other pupils. Scraggleville is quite a city now and I am one of her leading citizens and the wife of my bosom is Wild Rose.

J. L. MCARTHY.

CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Mr. Rawley walked in, and close at his heels stalked Bitters. Both seated themselves: the one on a chair, the other on end directly in front of the surrogate. Mr. Jagger looked at the dog with the solemn eye of a surrogate, and shook his head as only a surrogate can shake it.

"Are you the witness?" inquired he of the dog's master.

"I am, sir," replied Mr. Rawley. "I was subpoenaed to testify."

"What's that animal doing here?" demanded the surrogate.

"Nothing," replied Mr. Rawley. "He comes when I comes. He goes when I goes."

"The animal must leave the court. It's contempt of court to bring him here," said Mr. Jagger angrily. "Remove him instantly."

Mr. Rawley had frequently been in attendance at the police courts, and once or twice had a slight taste of the sessions; so that he was not as much struck with the surrogate as he otherwise might have been; and he replied:

"I make no opposition, sir; and shall not move a finger to prevent it. There's the animal; and any officer as pleases may remove him. I say nuffin 'agin it. I knows what a contempt of court is; and that ain't one." And Mr. Rawley threw himself amiably back in his chair.

"Mr. Slagg!" said the surrogate to the man with a frizzled wig, "remove the dog."

Mr. Slagg laid down his pen, took off his spectacles, went up to the dog, and told him to get out; to which Bitters replied by snapping at his fingers as he attempted to touch him. Mr. Rawley was staring abstractedly out of the window. The dog looked up at him for instructions, and, receiving none, supposed that snapping at scrivener's fingers was perfectly correct, and resumed his pleasant expression towards that functionary, occasionally casting a lowering eye at the surrogate as if deliberating whether to include him in his demonstrations of anger.

"Slagg, have you removed the dog?" said Mr. Jagger, who, the dog being under his very nose, saw that he had not.

"No, sir; he resists the court," replied Mr. Slagg.

"Call Walker to assist you," said Mr. Jagger. Walker, a thin man in drabs, had anticipated something of the kind, and accidentally withdrawn as soon as he saw that there was a prospect of difficulty; so the whole court was set at defiance by the dog.

"Witness!" said Mr. Jagger.

Mr. Rawley looked the court full in the face.

"Will you oblige the court by removing that animal?" said Mr. Jagger mildly.

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Rawley. "Bitters, go home. Bitters rose stiffly and went out, first casting a glance at the man with the wig, for the purpose of being able to identify him on some future occasion, and was soon after seen from the window walking up the street with the most profound gravity.—From the "Attorney," by John T. Irving.



MY DEAR MYSTIC FRIENDS:

Again the cycle has been completed, and again we are seated at the "Realm of Comfort," in this, the most joyous month of the whole year, to have our usual good time, chatting over the "Mystic Affairs," and tangling and untangling the "Intricate Knots from Puzzledom."

Oldcastle has brought with him this time, some fine original puzzles, the contributions of his Mystic Friends, which he is going to give you to solve; some refer to the yule-time season, and will be all the more interesting, others are founded on various entertaining subjects, while deep down in his "grip" he finds the diamonds sent in competition, having Oldcastle as a central word. Many good ones were received and a difficult task it was, to tell which was the best. However, Oldcastle found upon careful examination that the one sent by Doc of Worcester, Mass., contained some points of excellency that ranked it above the others, so, to him, is awarded the prize offered by Remardo.

To those who may see the lights of "The Mystic Castle" this month for the first time, would you not like to join "Our Mystic Band," and meet Oldcastle and his Mystic Friends at the "Realm of Comfort" every month? Would you not like to enjoy the many pleasures we have, the pleasures of tangling and untangling these "Mysteries" and win some of the nice prizes offered? A cordial invitation to join us is extended to you all, the doors of "The Mystic Castle" open wide to receive you and Oldcastle stands ready to greet you. All that is required of you, is to send original puzzles, or solutions to those below, better still both, to Oldcastle, Comfort, Utica, N. Y., and you will be enrolled as a member of "Our Mystic Band" and will enjoy all the comfort that it enjoys. When you request a reply by mail, please enclose a two-cent stamp. Sign your name and address plainly, adding your *nom de plume* if you have any.

Since my last journey, puzzles have been received from Doc, 8; Gardiner, 7; True Blue, Novice, 6; Romulus, 5; Hi A. Watha, Phil, Mrs. C. C. Haskell, 4; Line, Joan of Arc, 3; Apache, Little D. Nothing, Southern Girl (New Orleans, La.), Cal I. Florida, Florine, Nelson Forsyth, two each. Ypsie, "Burton Hall, Marion Stevens, Castranova, Delian, Odneal, Danville Solver, Roy and Fernin one each.

Doc and Gardiner are late and valued additions to "Our Mystic Band." Long may they remain with us. Have you sent in your list of words contained in "Oldcastle," in competition for the excellent prizes offered in November Mystic Castle? If not, you had better, dear mystic friend, as we want to have every COMFORT reader enter this contest and try to win one of the prizes. For conditions relating to this contest, see November "Mystic Castle."

Solvers to Sept. "Mysteries" are as follows:—Line, 15; Arty Fishel, Frank, Doc, 14; Frantz, Miss Blanche Bancroft, Ophir, Eglantine and Gwendoline, 13; Ray, Mrs. G. P. C. and W. E. Watt, 12; Ypsie, Delian, 11; Sunshine, 10; Aspiro, Castranova, 9; Thinker, 8; Alda, Fernin, Southern Girl, (New Orleans, La.), 7; Mrs. C. C. Haskell, Novice, Lalla Rookh, R. E. Fleet, Danville Solver, Columbia, 6; Mater, Remardo, 5; Arthur, Cowboy, Hi A. Watha, 4; Olive R. Sudden, Will, 3; Old Woman, 2; O. F. Baughman, 1.

Prize-winners:—1. Line. 2. Arty Fishel. 3. Frank. Specials:—1. Danville Solver. 2. Ray.

Now, dear friends, I must bring this visit to a close and wend my way homeward, hoping to meet you all again next month.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am
Your dear old Mystic Friend, OLDCASTLE.

SOLUTIONS TO SEPTEMBER'S MYSTERIES.

No. 211. Comfortable. No. 212. Rudyard Kipling. No. 213. Justice. No. 214. War—raw. No. 215. Puns, spun.

No. 216. P. SAC CAROB JACOB LADDERS
S. AMARES CAPITATIONS
P. PARAGOGIC BALUSTERS
C. OCOROCED LECTURN
B. EGORED SKINS
S. SIRENE SNE
C. CEDES G

No. 219. S. FID BEDEW
F. FEDERAL
S. IDERITIS
D. DERIVED
W. WATER
L. LID

No. 222. E. ESTATE
S. SLAVES
T. TALENT
A. AVENUE
T. TENURE
E. ESTEM
L. LITTLE ROCK, ORANGE, MILK, DOG, BEAR, FEAR, FAREWELL.

No. 226. M. MACACUS
T. TOMELET
L. LAMENTS
P. POLENTA
P. PATENTS
P. PODESTA

No. 223. Comfort. No. 225. Margarita, Magdalena, Ben Nevis, Tom Bigby, Grand, Margarita, Magdalena, Po. Ben, Nevis, Tom Bigby, Wheeling, Chili, Nubia, Seal, Little Rock, Orange, Milk, Dog, Bear, Fear, Farewell.

No. 224. A Christmas Box. Made from 40. 5, 23, 73, 92, 96, 57, 100. Trimmed with 82, 71, 46, 11, 2, 37, 58, 81, 90. 62, 88, 18, 59, 15, 27, 72, 5.

Lined with 95, 41, 56, 71, 54, 98, 51, 85, 33, 38, 81, 49, 22. The bottom is 4, 44, 89, 87, 45, 51, 64, 98, 7, 17. The back is 83, 67, 51, 77.

The front is 50, 79, 9, 30, 31, 19, 27, 72. The cover is 21, 96, 3, 93, 5. The end is 51, 84, 95, 54, 25. The pattern is 79, 39, 67, 45. 65, 55, 95, 86, 13, 20. The box contains 76, 86, 99, 5. 1, 24, 79, 6, 26, 97, 48, 78, 10, 70, 19, 14, 36, 60, 89, 79, 68, 94, 18. 82, 52, 45, 3, 80, 24, 61, 14. 54, 28, 76, 79, 15, 93, 35.

Let us sing whole, our song of praise, On this, the king of holidays.

Hopkinsville, Ky., DELIAN. No. 150. Numerical. I have heard of "an edible seaweed," Its name—5, 9, 3, 1, 7, 4; Leather-colored, grows under the water; Of that, I will tell you no more. The "back-bone of an animal," look for

The letters—10, 6, 8, 3, 2; When you conquer the TOTAL, recite it, 'Tis "a birthday poem," for you. Etua, Ohio.

No. 251. Numerical. "Hello! my friend," 2, 8, 5 said, As they met in the village store; "Remember the bet with me you made, That you would chew no more." "What makes you spit and spit away? Have you to chew begun? You 3, 11, 4 must say— Ha! Ha! the bet I've won."

He replied, with a 7, 6, 9 and a grin, "Oh no, 10, 1 on my soul, For a cold I took some medicine, In mistake, I took a whole, Gouldsboro Sta., Pa., ARTHUR.

No. 252. Double Letter Enigma. In "lofty cone," In "purer tone," In "warmer zone." The FIRST is one of worthless chaps; The WHOLE, an evening bell. The LAST, "not many," and, perhaps— But this is all I'll tell. Wataga, Ill., OLD PETE.

No. 253. Double Letter Enigma. "In 'ocean so blue;" In 'jacket so new;" In 'battery's guns;" In 'jokers' puns." Perhaps you'll guess it, When you are told, My WHOLE is worth Its weight in gold. Montpelier, Ohio, JEW V. NILE.

No. 254. Crossword. In porter not in beer, In mind not in hear; In table not in chair, In cat not in bear; In safety not in danger, In barn not in manger; In yours not in mine, In theirs not in thine; In thoughtful not in witty, Whole is an Eastern city. Washington, Pa., WILL.

No. 255. Guillotination. 1. Guillotine sentment, and have a wing; 2. A frame of wood, and have certain serpents; 3. Directed, and leave puffed up; 4. To correct, and leave to hurry; 5. To contract, and have exact; 6. Limited, and have tinged; 7. Contract, and have a deed; 8. Educated, and have deserved; 9. A large stable, and have a groom. Guillotined letters form a friend of the "Mystic Krewe." Belton, Tex., BLACK EYED CHARLEY.

No. 256. Christmas Anagram. They SAY I HOLD ONE OF THE—what? Yes, who do they say that I hold? It may be of greenbacks, a lot, Or a purse of pure nickels or gold. My uncles and cousins, all gay And wealthy, are coming to see Our folks on next Christmas day, And jolly as larks will we be. Christmas is TOTAL, no doubt, And we'll dress in our best, every one. And with laughter, and romping and shout, We'll have our full quantum of fun. The presents all costly and rare, We'll enjoy, and as treasures lay in; But we'll give to the needy a share, And thus their good will, will we win. They SAY I HOLD ONE OF THE charms, And truly, when kindness we show, Joy follows and blesses our aims, And dispels every shadow of woe. Dubois, Ill., ASPIRO.

No. 257. Square. 1. System of government. 2. A certain instrument. 3. Show. 4. A Titanic iron ore. 5. Measuring. 6. A genus of plants. Bangor, Pa., T. HINKER.

No. 258. Pentagon. 1. A letter. 2. One who deserts his party. 3. Spoke with hesitation. 4. Games of chance. 5. Depressed in spirits. 6. Babbling. 7. Discourses at great length. 8. More valuable. 9. Receptacles of numbers. Philadelphia, Pa., NYPHO.

No. 259. Hexagon. 1. To range or wander over. 2. An ancient Italian language. 3. A genus of leguminous trees and shrubs. 4. A character in Shakespeare. 5. A method of ornamenting metal plates. 6. A volume of plates. 7. An army. Oswego, N. Y., VENUS.

No. 260. Half Square. 1. A letter. 2. A prefix denoting with. 3. To put on. 4. Bark. 5. A carnivorous animal. 6. Disgusting. 7. Stems of the calamus. 8. To loathe. 9. One who complies. 10. Certain vessels. San Francisco, Cal., J. C. M.

No. 261. Charade. (By sound.) 'Twas a "Mystic Castle," in mystic lands, And a mystic spell was round it; There were mystic bundles and a mystic roll, And a mystic string that bound it; And an old man sat in a high back chair, Whose locks were grizzly and gray. He'd wandered away across the LAST, And he'd searched for many a day, To gather thus, fully, his mystic store, For the TOTAL time drew near, When many are glad and FIRST delight, To receive his welcome cheer. For the mystic spell brings a mystic joy, And a mystic word for all, From "The Mystic Castle" of mystic lands; Long live its mystic thrall. Binghamton, N. Y., FRANTZ.

No. 262. Charade. One day a rare old gentleman Cuddled at my father's house, And I, as erat I had been taught, Kept still as any mouse. At last my father introduced The gentleman to me; He asked a question, "Can you first?" I answered, I two three. The whole's a name in an old play, Writ years and years ago; "The rehearsal" and a braggar he Spares neither friend nor foe. Providence, R. I., RAY.

No. 263. Prize Diamond. 1. A letter. 2. Old times, (poetic.) 3. A country in Asia. 4. To form with scales. 5. A noted puzzler's nom de plume. 6. Interval. 7. To vary. 8. A shade tree. 9. A letter. Worcester, Mass., DOC.

No. 264. Diamond. 1. A letter. 2. Sorrowful. 3. One who hates. 4. An inclosure, on or near which the mansion house stands. 5. A native of Samaria. 6. Water-ousels. 7. Raved as a mad-man. 8. Revolves. 9. Receives. 10. A male nickname. 11. A letter. Poutney, Vt., GUARDINER.

No. 265. Pentagon. 1. A consonant. 2. An electrical unit. 3. Went astray. 4. Low-growing plants, with purple flowers. 5. A church festival. 6. A colorless liquid resembling turpentine. 7. A lord's manor place. 8. An Indian brave. 9. Oozy. Worcester, Mass., DOC.

PRIZES FOR SOLUTIONS. For the first three complete, or largest lists of solutions to this month's "Mysteries," the following prizes will be awarded: 1. One year's subscription to COMFORT. 2. Six-month's subscription to COMFORT. 3. Multum in Parvo Songster.

Specials:—Among all sending four or more solutions, will be awarded first, a six-month's subscription to COMFORT; second, Carl's Treasure Cabinet; third, Dime Savings Bank. Solutions must be received prior to Feb. 1, 1892, to be acknowledged in March "Mystic Castle."

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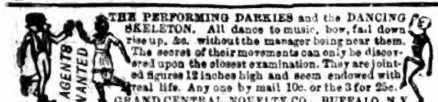
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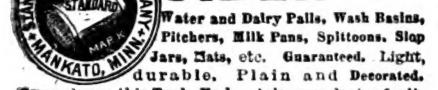


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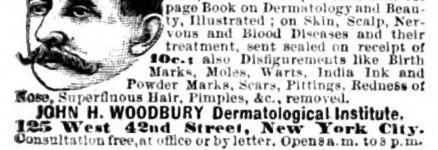


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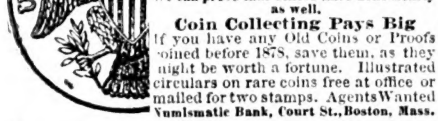
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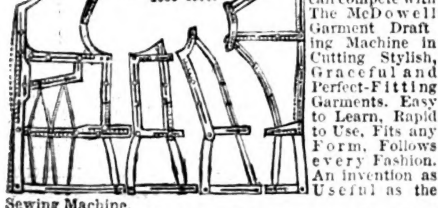
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